B
T718
Massingham
cop,1
226862
Friend of Shelley
ANNEX

B
T718
Massingham
226862
Friend of Shelley
STORAGE

PUBLIC LIBRARY
FORT WAYNE AND ALLEN COUNTY, IND.

M.L.

ANNEX

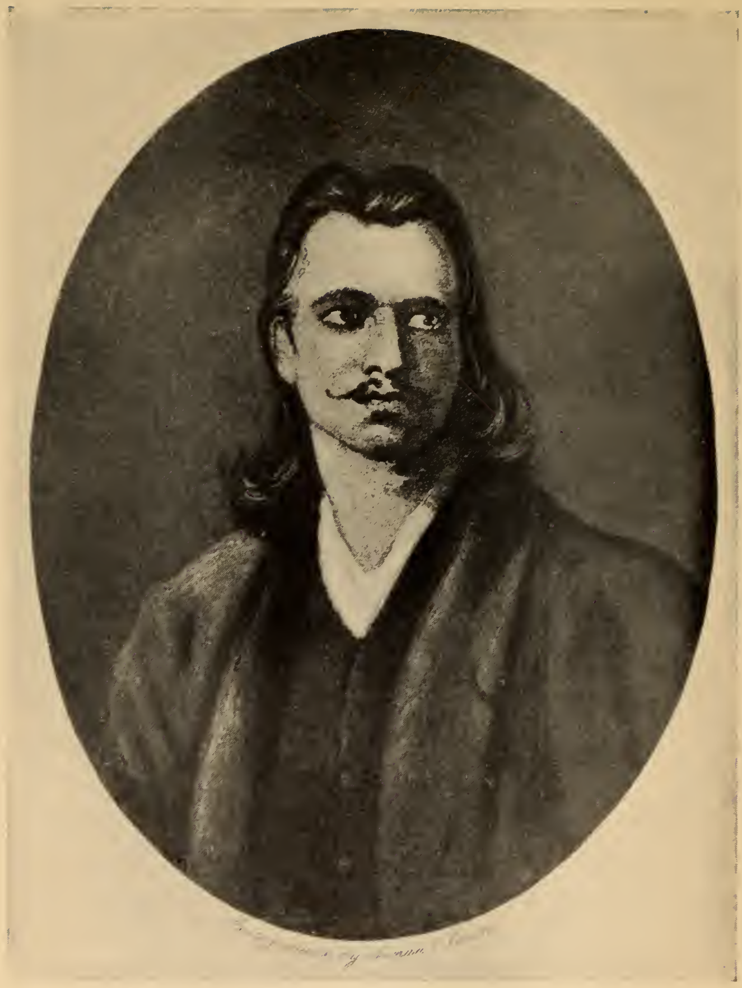
DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS FROM POCKET

STO
ANNEX
N THDRAWN
ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1833 00195 9136

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011

http://www.archive.org/details/friendofshelleym00mass

# THE FRIEND OF SHELLEY



E. J. TRELAWNY

FROM A PORTRAIT AFTER J. SEVERN, FORMERLY IN THE POSSESSION OF SIR PERCY F. SHELLEY, BART.

# THE FRIEND OF SHELLEY

## *A Memoir of Edward John Trelawny*

BY

H. J. MASSINGHAM

B
T718

NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
MCMXXX

COPYRIGHT, 1930, BY
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

*All rights reserved. This book, or parts thereof, must not be reproduced in any form without permission of the publisher*

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

226862

*To*

RUTH ROSEDALE

# INTRODUCTION

This memoir of Edward John Trelawny has presented me with many problems to solve and many difficulties to overcome. It is not merely that no previous biography of Trelawny exists. His papers were burnt at his death; first-hand accounts of him have only appeared at long intervals and in scattered periodicals, nearly all published in the last century and all quite brief, while the thumb-nail sketches of him in biographies of Shelley, Byron, Leigh Hunt and Mary Shelley are necessarily indirect. Most of the pen-portraits of Trelawny, again, are no more than abbreviated paraphrases of his own *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron.* The *Dictionary of National Biography* and the Introduction to Mr. Edward Garnett's edition of *The Adventures of a Younger Son* (1890) are the only sources which make any real attempt to carry the reader beyond Trelawny's associations with Shelley and Byron and to deal with his life as a whole.

But even these rills of knowledge suffer from an acute drought of information. Decades of his life are crowded into fewer sentences of print. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to say that the known events of Trelawny's life for more than half a century after the death of Byron could be covered by a dozen lines of script. I was soon to discover that I had to qualify as a secret service agent as well as a biographer, if I was to stock some of those empty years. I have been lucky enough to obtain a good deal of fresh material in the shape of unpublished letters, documents and reliable information. But even this has not sufficed to fill in consecutively the wide acreage of time. Trelawny's life, as it has come down to us, lacks all continuity; the brief summer of the Shelley period, followed closely by the thronged adventures of the Greek expedition, fades into an unbroken twilight which I have done my best to prospect.

Trelawny's reputation is another major difficulty for his biographer. It has suffered of recent years partly owing to the doubts cast upon his historical veracity and partly to the uncritical acceptance of two or three ugly incidents associated with his name. I have endeavoured to shed the light of new material upon these and to explain their psychological setting. I have also made a point of examining the charges brought against his truthfulness.

I have not attempted to pursue the usual course of an historical biography. Trelawny's life is quite unsuited to that method. More than half the book is occupied with Trelawny's living relations to Shelley, Byron and Mary Shelley, for the simple reason that his associations with them were by far the most significant part of his life. For the same reason, it has been essential to discuss and even try to revalue them individually because of Trelawny's reaction to them in his own writings no less than in his life.

What was it in Shelley the human being which secured the lifelong devotion of a man like Trelawny? For Shelley was never more a reality to him than in the last years of his old age, while Byron and Mary Shelley produced very marked and curiously similar effects upon his character. The later Byron of the Pisa and

Genoa period would not, but for Trelawny, have taken on the particular guises he did, while Trelawny's final estimate of Mary Shelley differs radically from the accepted version of her, and I have found it necessary to weigh the justice of that estimate. In these revaluations, I have tried to look at all three from a single point of view, and this, I hope, gives a certain measure of cohesion to the volume. The *disjecta membra* of Trelawny's own career make it imperative to seek some such unity.

The last difficulty I need touch upon here is Trelawny's own character as a man. Modern biographers have, as I mentioned above, dealt severely with it, while their predecessors have been, some of them, too indulgent. The biographers of Shelley bless him; of Byron curse him. These conflicting estimates suffer from lack of perspective; Trelawny's life must be viewed as a whole, and I hope that the figure that emerges from these pages forms itself naturally from his own actions, writings and human contacts.

I have to make special acknowledgments to Mr Trelawny Irving, the grandson of Trelawny's daughter by his Greek wife, for the valuable information he has given me, chiefly concerning his grandmother and her mother, Tersitza, for the two photographs he has lent me and for his unfailing kindness in coming to my assistance. All of this information is entirely new. I have also to extend particular thanks to Mrs. Draper of Montreal, for sending me a collection of unpublished Trelawny letters to her relative, born Augusta White. I am indebted to Messrs. Macmillan and Company for permission to reproduce the portrait of Trelawny after J. Severn which appeared in their edition of *The Life* *and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.* I am afraid I have failed to trace the present owner of this portrait and the owner of the portrait of Trelawny in Greek dress by Kirkup, to both of whom I should have liked to make acknowledgment. I am grateful to my old friend, Mr. Edmund Blunden, for helping me in bibliographical details, giving me reference clues and talking over certain aspects of Trelawny with me; to Mr. de V. Payen-Payne for sending me an unpublished Trelawny letter to the artist, Seymour Kirkup; to Captain F. L. Pleadwell for another unpublished letter; to Mr. H. J. Tilden for relating an admirable Trelawny incident at which he was present; to Mr. T. J. Wise for one or two details about Trelawny given in the text and for a pleasant talk about him; to Mr. John Drinkwater for certain suggestions, and lastly to my publishers for their very human and friendly relations with me during the preparation of the book.

H. J. M.

# CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION . . . . . . . . . . vii

CHAPTER

I. THE PIRATE . . . . . . . . . . 1

II. THE PIRATE AND THE PILGRIM . . . . 40

III. THE POET AND THE PIRATE . . . . . 114

IV. THE POET'S WIFE . . . . . . . . 186

V. LIFE AND LETTERS (1822-1847) . . . . 231

VI. THE OLD REBEL (1847-1881) . . . . 303

APPENDICES . . . . . . . . . . . 339

- Shelley's Heart
- The Loss of the "Ariel": Accident or Foul Play?
- A Letter of Joseph Severn
- Copies of Shelley's Poems in the Trelawny MSS.
- Swimming Niagara
- Portraits of Trelawny
- A List of Books Together with the Principal Editions of Trelawny's Works
- A Calendar of Trelawny's Life

INDEX . . . . . . . . . . . . . 363

# ILLUSTRATIONS

E. J. TRELAWNY . . . . . . . . . . *frontispiece*
(From a portrait after J. Severn)

FACING PAGE

LORD BYRON . . . . . . . . . . . . . 42
(From a painting by Thomas Phillips, R.A.)

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY . . . . . . . . . . 116
(From a painting by George Clint)

THE VILLA MAGNI, BAY OF SPEZIA, WITH THE "ARIEL" IN THE FOREGROUND . . . . . . . 148
(From a drawing by Captain D. Roberts, R.N.)

MARY SHELLEY . . . . . . . . . . . . 188
(From a painting by S. J. Stamp)

FACSIMILE OF AN EXTRACT FROM A LETTER OF E. J. TRELAWNY TO CLAIRE CLAIRMONT . . . 234

E. J. TRELAWNY . . . . . . . . . . . . 256
(From a painting by Seymour Kirkup)

MRS. OLGUIN (ZELLA TRELAWNY) . . . . . . 292

MRS. BURLEY (MARIA JULIA TRELAWNY) . . . . 296

E. J. TRELAWNY . . . . . . . . . . . 316

*This above all: to thine own self be true,*
*And it must follow, as the night the day,*
*Thou canst not then be false to any man.*

HAMLET

# CHAPTER I

## *THE PIRATE*

*I carry with me, wherever I go—I don't know how it is, but it is so—an atmosphere of life and stir which has become proverbial.*

—DUMAS ON HIMSELF

### § 1

### FACT AND FICTION *or* TRUTH AND TRELAWNY

EVER since Edward John Trelawny leaped into the limelight as the companion of Shelley and Byron, he has been roundly abused as an unconscionable liar. Certain statements he made throughout his switchbark career lend colour to the idea that he had a rough and highhanded way with the truth and, in consequence of them, his biographical authority in respect both to himself and his great contemporaries has been approached with deeper suspicion than it has deserved. *The Adventures of a Younger Son,* the only other book he wrote besides his personal memories of Shelley and Byron, he claimed to be an autobiography. As it is the sole document we possess which gives an account of his early life, it is important to try and find out what credence, if any, we are justified in yielding to it. The issue is even larger, for the stake is Trelawny himself.

## EARLY YEARS

The *Younger Son* only compasses one segment and a bit over of those earlier years, and that when he was adventuring in Eastern seas. The rest of nearly thirty years between his birth and dash across Western Europe in 1821 to visit the outlawed Shelley is all but blank. Even the date of his birth is uncertain: Dowden puts it at 1793, Mr. Edward Garnett on the 2nd or 3rd of November, 1792. More probably it was on the 13th of November of that year. Little is known of his parentage. He was the second son of Lieut.-Colonel Charles Brereton Trelawny (1757-1820) of Shotwisk, who was Member of Parliament for Mitchell between 1808–9 and 1814, and the grandson of the General Henry Trelawny who fought under Howe in America. Burke traces the family back to John of Treloen in the 10th century, and his lineage, as certain heritable traits in his character declare, was deeply rooted in Cornish soil.[1] It is curious that Trelawny, like Shelley, his spiritual mentor, was in blood of the lower aristocracy. When his father was 29, he married Maria Hawkins of Trewithen, the sister of Sir Christopher Hawkins, and the stubbornness of that tough stock carried Trelawny himself through 88 years, his mother through 93 and his daughter, Zella, through 81. His mother was sometimes erroneously called "Lady" Trelawny, but Trelawny's daughter, Zella, who at one time lived with her, declared she had no right to the title. Oddly enough, there was a dispute in Chancery at the end of 1929 relating to Romney's portrait of Trelawny's mother, which used to hang at Caerhayes

---

[1] The Cornish blood was perhaps slightly injected with Spanish—a congenial blending—but this is uncertain.

Castle in Cornwall. The portrait came into the possession of the Trevanion family,[1] and the grandfather of the defendant in the case had written on the back of the canvas, "a very disagreeable old woman." This is not mere genealogical gossip. Trelawny's parentage, of whose influence upon him one hears something in the *Younger Son,* played a deep-seated and altogether evil part upon his life.

The record of the first twelve or thirteen years of his boyhood is set down in the opening chapters of the *Younger Son.* Like all of them, they are very short chapters, and the only biographical sources. Trelawny entered the Navy in October, 1805, and his narrative extends as far as 1811 when, according to his own account, he was in Batavia. Between 1811 and 1813, when he re-appeared in England, he left himself severely alone, and that year or the next he married Julia Addison, who was not his first wife, as all brief recorders declare, but his second. This marriage was as unhappy as his father's and submerged him so completely that, though the *Recollections* contain one reference which suggests that he travelled again for seven years, we hear nothing more of him until suddenly he pops up at Geneva in 1820, obviously restored to bachelorhood.

He has lighted upon an obscure work called *Queen Mab* by one P. B. Shelley. Upon his father's death that same year, he returned to England, and then, the moment his affairs would let him, shot off late in 1821 to Pisa where the Shelleys were living. For some years the landscape of his life is well sign-posted in the *Recollections,* which is virtually the second volume of his earlier autobiography, with a gap of ten years of life and twenty-seven of authorship between them. It is of no mean moment, therefore, to decide whether the *Younger Son* is a novel of adventure in the Stevenson manner or the personal annals of his own early life that he himself asserted it to be.

---

[1] The Trevanions here mentioned were connected with the Henry Trevanion who married Georgiana Leigh, the eldest daughter of Augusta Leigh, Byron's half-sister, and who was the lover of Medora Leigh, the child of Byron and Augusta (see Ethel Mayne's *Lady Byron*). The elder brother of Henry Trevanion married Trelawny's younger sister, Charlotte, in 1827, and it is an interesting fact that Trelawny and Byron thus became distantly related.

## GENESIS OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The *Younger Son* was published in 1831 and written in 1829–30, when Trelawny had left Greece and was settled in Florence. The Shelley-Byron period, that is to say, is interposed between the actual events recorded and the writer's memories of them. Since that period of intensified living moulded the whole of the sixty years that followed it, we should expect to find evidence, both external and internal, of its signature upon the pages of the *Younger Son,* the hero of which had never heard of Byron and Shelley when he lived the adventures he wrote about. It is queer to think of Shelley's spirit among a motely gang of privateers boarding an English frigate or even Byron hunting tigers with a Malay bodyguard in a Bornean jungle. Nevertheless, the triumvirate of the *Younger Son*—Trelawny himself, de Ruyter his leader and Zela his arab bride—draw their passionate breath within the towering shadows of the two poets.

It would not be strictly accurate to say that the revolutionary sentiments expressed in the *Younger Son* sprang from the loins of these Dioscuri. They were the godfathers rather than the parents of them. What their influence did was to fructify and divert into impersonal channels Trelawny's own furious revolt against his domestic upbringing and his father's tyranny. He went out into the turbulent world of the East, a rebel by nature and by circumstance; the Romantic Revival gave form and content to what might otherwise have been individualism run crazy and mere explosions of intractability. Nor would it be true to say that the poet who enriched the world with his vision of romantic love created Zela for Trelawny and Trelawny's fire for Zela. One may say that it was Shelley who made that love articulate, blended it with the ardour of tropic isles and flushed it with the hues of their heavens. Would he have burned in manuscript the body of his poisoned mate, loaded in barbaric finery, and in an iron furnace withal, had he not in fact performed the same rites for Shelley?

The figure of de Ruyter himself, whom Trelawny always maintained to be a real person, has doubtless borrowed a good deal of his literary make-up from the Greek chieftain, Odysseus, Trelawny's captain in Greece, but infused with Byron's hauteur and Shelley's humanity. The poetry of the book, its alertness to natural beauty, particularly in the voyage along the coast of Borneo and among the Sunda Islands, the rich colours wherein it is stained, its pictorial qualities, together with the air of wide freedom that sustains it, all owe an immeasurable debt to Shelley's mental magnetism, as does much of its tense emotional pitch and extravagance of gesture to Byron. His paint-box was in fact presented to him by the two poets of his prime, if the canvas he used it on was his own early manhood. But because they instilled the arts of expression into his unlettered mind, and instructed him in the tone and measure of his speech, that is not to discredit the authentic sources of his text, nor his instinctive powers of manifesting them. The *Younger Son* is in no sense an imitative work, as was Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein.*

Externally, the numerous chapter-headings in the book show the interference of the Romantic Revival with the events of his youth. "I have selected," he wrote to Mary in 1830, "mottoes from the only three poets who were the staunch advocates of liberty and my contemporaries." Keats, of course, he never knew personally, but Charles Armitage Brown, who, together with Landor, constituted himself joint-midwife of the work, supplied him with many Keats manuscripts for the selection of quotations. Joseph Severn wrote to Brown in 1832:

> Trelawny went to England in the spring. Everyone ascribes the "Younger Son" to him, but I believe he still denies it. I am told it runs off like wildfire. At the head of every chapter are one or two quotations from Byron, Keats and Shelley—from *no one else;* and Woodhouse and I think his lordship does not look over grand in such company. Woodhouse also thinks that these quotations, in so popular a book, will be of great service to the fame of Keats, and indeed they are chosen, in number 53 great and small, with much care—some great friend of Keats must have done all this, don't you imagine so?

The "great friend" was he who received the letter. Thus, between the adventures as they were lived and as they were described twenty years later, there exists a stratum of concentrated experience whose values exercised a deeper influence on the writer than did the actual passage of time separating acts from record.

The second literary derivation of the *Younger Son,* strongly marked if quite incongruous with the first, are the eighteenth century novelists, Smollett and Fielding in particular. We gather this mainly by internal evidence, but he says himself that he wrote his chapters short "in the style of Fielding," and he describes Millingen, one of Byron's doctors at Missolonghi, as like Simper in *Roderick Random.* So much for his nurses. All the rest of the book is himself in grain, in style and in temperament. How can we tell whether it represents himself in action?

### A TRUE STORY

Severn, it will be noted, tells Armitage Brown that in the year after its publication he was still denying his paternity. In April, 1831, some six months before publication, he wrote to Mary that it was "absolutely indispensable" that the book should appear anonymously. "If my name is known, and the work can be brought home to me, the consequences will be most disastrous." He did not persist in disavowing his identity, because Mary told him three months later that his mother was speaking openly of his forthcoming memoirs. Mr. Edward Garnett explains his attitude as a love of mystery. But if the *Younger Son* was written as a work of imaginative fiction, why should he have been so anxious to disclaim his authorship? Mary Shelley had told him he must not be so coarse; Byron had impressed it on him in a hundred malicious ways that he regarded him as an untoward liar, while the career of the hero was not such as to urge the critics to pelt him with flowers.

When the book came out, the *Athenæum* asked, "What is the utility of drawing a character in which there is not a single redeeming point?", a character who was "a kind of ruffian from his birth," whose "errors and crimes" were "those of a savage," and who was delineated in language of "extreme grossness." Trelawny himself in a further resolution to remain unknown, quotes another criticism from the *Military Review*:

> I have not yet seen the book in its printed form, but enough of criticism on it—here is one from the stately and staid *Military Review* which is a fair sample of the rest. "Wild, libertine and eccentric, revolting yet attractive, savage yet sentimental, abounding in contrasts, as if its pictures had been alternately traced by a fiend and a fairy—such are the characteristics of this free-booter's tale."

If the work was autobiographical, there was reason, in the glabrous taste of the age, for unfurling the umbrella of anonymity.

Through the kindness of Mr. H. J. Tilden, an amusing story came my way to illustrate this point and take us on to the next. In 1870, Mr. Tilden was the assistant of the Senior Clerk, George Whitley, of Trelawny's bankers, Messrs. Hoare. Trelawny had lent Whitley a copy of the *Younger Son,* and the latter returned it one day when Mr. Tilden was present.

"Well, Whitley," the old man said, "that is the true story of my life." Whitley answered, "Then all I can say, Sir, is, you ought to be hanged." Trelawny, in Mr. Tilden's words, "took it very well and merely burst into a loud laugh." No wonder—he could not have been paid a greater compliment.

Even if we assume Trelawny's book to have inspired the youthful ambitions of de Rougemont, we are bound to pay some regard to what a man tells us about his own work, particularly as, in respect of the *Younger Son,* a copious correspondence passed between Mary and Trelawny. Though Landor and Brown were its literary sponsors,[1] Mary devoted much labour to reading the manuscript consulting Horace Smith with a view to the omission of certain passages which offended her squeamish taste, and acting as author's agent to the publishers. Though Trelawny violently repudiated the need to bundle a single salty adjective out of the book, she got her way, and also imposed her judgment more innocently as a sub-editor in the revision of what Landor and Brown had left undone with the spelling and orthography. Trelawny can be quite fairly called an uneducated man, a fact which saved his writing from the showmanship which sometimes disfeatured his life and manner. His grammar, syntax and spelling needed a Mary as an extra hand to the toils of Brown and Landor in ordering their chaos and lassoing his virile English when it stampeded. She was certainly engaged more profitably in debating the author's royalties with Colburn the publisher, and demurring at the earlier drafts of the title—"The Discarded Son," "The Life of a Man" and "A Man's Life"—than in playing the censor to a book which had already been scrutinised by Brown, Landor, Kirkup, the Barings and Lady Burghersh.

If anybody, then, was admitted to the inner councils of Trelawny during the incubation of the *Younger Son,* it was Mary. And we may add that if anybody would have preferred the book to have been fiction rather than fact, from the point of view both of her literary predilections and her standing with society, it would have been Mary. Yet its author peremptorily insists that it was "a true and particular account" of his past life. In 1875, he told Mr. Richard Edgcumbe that it was "a faithful record of my early life," and repeated his statement to William Rossetti three years later. Nearly fifty years earlier, he told Claire Clairmont that he intended to write a second series, "taking up my story where the first is left off," continuous with the first concerned with his life in Italy and Greece. This was the *Recollections,* not written until nearly thirty years later but unquestionably the "faithful record" he claimed the first instalment of his autobiography to be.

---

[1] "I am actually writing my own life. Brown and Landor are spurring me on, and are to review it sheet by sheet." March, 1829.

To Mary he made the same professions. It was on the ground of the verity of his narrative that he resisted her abhorred shears:

> It has been a painful and arduous undertaking narrating my life. I have omitted a great deal, and avoided being a pander to the public taste for the sake of novelty or effect. . . . My life, though I have sent it to you, as the dearest friend I have, is not written for the amusement of women; it is not a novel. If you begin clipping the wings of my true story . . . if you begin erasing words, you must then omit sentences, then chapters; it will be pruning an Indian jungle down to a clipped French garden. . . .[1] [And], I shall be so appalled at my MS. in its printed form, that I shall have no heart to go on with it.

If *all* these statements are misrepresentations, then words are never so guileful as when they are candid and ingenuous. If to accept their good faith means that credulity is dumped upon one with it, at least there is the other side of the question. If the sun were to doubt, said Blake, "it would immediately go out."

---

[1] See p. 208.

### VERITY AND ACCURACY

The great trouble of course is the dearth of external standards of reference and means of verification. If Trelawny had wanted to huddle the clouds of doubt round his little orb, he could not have chosen a better method than transporting it to Eastern skies. There fancy was free indeed, nor were its roamings subject to the restrictions of documentary enquiry. Nevertheless, fragments of comparative evidence do exist, and are much more valuable than their minuteness indicates. They reveal together with Trelawny's casual and manipulative methods with the truth, the sources of his reputation for falsehood. They enable us in fact not only to obtain a clear perspective of his general reliability or the reverse, but afford us clues to the nature of the man himself.

In the *Younger Son,* for instance, he describes how he was appointed by de Ruyter to deliver dispatches to the Governor of Java and arrived at Batavia to find the "cholera morbus" raging there. His steward Luis, who poured enough liquor down his throat "to wear out a dozen copper funnels" caught it and died. In a letter to Mary of July, 1831, he wrote:

> In the chapter towards the conclusion wherein I narrate an account of a pestilence which was raging in the town of Batavia, I wish the words "Java fever" to be erased and "cholera morbus" substituted. For we alone had the former on board the schooner, having brought it into the Batavia Roads with us. . . . It was in 1811 I am speaking of.

But in his narrative, his hero sails for Europe some months before the capture of Port Bourbon by the English from the Dutch in December, 1810. But that he actually was off the coast of Java in 1811 is confirmed by an official proclamation in Malay among his papers of the establishment of British authority there. It is endorsed by Sir Stamford Raffles and dated September 12th, 1811, while a note of the same date occurs in the MS. of a Koran belonging to him.

In the same way, it is difficult, as Mr. Brailsford points out, to guess at what time in 1812 or 1813 Napoleon, marching to Moscow and back, found leisure to receive de Ruyter in Paris and chat about affairs in the East with him. Elsewhere, he appears to confuse a Chinese sword, deeply chased with roses and figures of solid gold, which was looted from a Chinese junk, with a Japanese sword which Rossetti presented to him. In the opening pages of the *Younger Son*, again, he relates how when he was twelve years old he joined the Navy[1] in the "Superb," being three days late for Trafalgar through Admiral Duckworth's delay at Plymouth in shipping potatoes and mutton. The improbability of this is manifest, since the "Superb," which was detailed for service in blockading Cadiz, did not actually arrive off the harbour until November 15th, though the battle was fought on October 21st. According to his own statement, he was transfered to a sloop of war (the "Colossus") a few days after Trafalgar, but he was not appointed to this ship until November 20th. He was paid off with a certificate of good conduct on December 29th and there is no reason to doubt his residence at Dr. Burney's Academy at Greenwich and subsequent sailing in a King's ship for the East Indies. The story of his desertion at Bombay is negatively corroborated by the absence of a regular discharge, and it is certain that he then became a privateer in the French service and under the captaincy either of Senouf or de Witt or one now nameless but idealised in the portrait of de Ruyter.

---

[1] The following is a copy of the certificate in the possession of Trelawny's daughter, Mrs. Call, which I append in view of Mr. Edward Garnett's statement that a document owned by Mrs. Call shows that he never held warrant or commission in the Navy:

"These are to certify the principal Officers and Commissions of His Majesty's Navy that Mr. Edwd. jno. Trelawny served as volunteer of the 1st Class on board His Majesty's Ship Colossus under my Command from the 20 November 1805 to the date hereof, during which time he behaved with diligence and sobriety and was always obedient to command.

Given under my hand this 29th December 1805,
J. N. Morris, *Captain.*"

It seems plain to me that we are going to get nowhere with Trelawny, unless we make the proper distinction between accuracy and veracity. In the eighty-fourth chapter, for instance, his Zela and himself had landed at a little cove on the east coast of Borneo. Out of the jungle which walled it in appeared a grizzled and hairy figure with "a wild and sullen malignity of expression," armed with a large club. He climbed trees, picked mussels, collected firewood and finally entered a hut of wattled canes. Hearing his pursuer, the "gaunt old wretch" made for him and would have felled him with his club, had Trelawny not shot him just in time. This oddling beast-man was an orang-utan, but it is easy to understand how his natural historian came to adorn his visitant with such unnatural attributes. The surgeon of the schooner, Van Scolpvelt, who anatomised this anthropoidal genius, proceeded to invest him with capacities that reduce Trelawny's noble colouring to a watery grey, that would have made Pliny pale with envy, and passed the beast off unnoticed in Piccadilly. Trelawny no doubt did actually encounter an orang-utan and credulity together with a long-viewing memory fastened upon the ape those civilised and up-to-date characteristics which the surgeon had poured into his receptive ear.

Once, in pondering over Trelawny's truthfulness—a rather complex aspect of a comparatively simple character—with me, Mr. Blunden said that his statements reminded him of a series of clouds passing over the heavens. The stable sky was the fact in itself; the clouds, each different in contour, size, colour and density, were his several versions of it. In other words, Trelawny's inability to apprehend the truth in its fixity was due to a looseness of adjustment in his mental lenses. But this, I felt at the time, was something of a tribute to his contact with the nature of things. If Trelawny saw the given data a little differently on Friday to what he did on Wednesday or Thursday, that shows that his representations of things were never laboured nor hardened into a mould. They were fresh and spontaneous. There was a direct intercourse between the thing seen and his translation of it. He was not Jesuitical in his approach. There are plenty of dubious deeds in Trelawny's life for the moralist to dwell upon. But his wells were not tainted. His impatience with minutiae often led him astray, but he was free from the pedantry and so the untrustworthiness of the man who never gets a date wrong. It is his accuracy not his veracity which is questionable.

His mind was elastic, responsive to new impressions, and Byron in thinking him an inveterate liar was more mistaken about him than he was about Byron. The inveterate liar is the dogmatist who squeezes the face of truth into a grimace that connives at his own purposes. But Trelawny always spoke out loud and bold; his reactions were instantaneous and so unimpeded. It is partly this quality that makes his personal impressions of Shelley unsurpassed; he caught the life as it flew, so to speak, and because what he wrote was lifelike, it was veracious and so trustworthy. A man of the Trelawnian molten metal is incapable of conscious deceit; he does not possess the requisite controls. He can play a part all right; but he can never impersonate anybody but himself, even when he imitates others. I suggest that it was this direct contact with experience that makes Trelawny an essentially truthful man, even when we happen to know that he is getting the truth all wrong. "Mary," said Shelley, one day at Pisa when Trelawny was present. "Tre has found out Byron already. How stupid we were; how long it took us!" "That," quoth Mary, "is because he lives with the living and we with the dead."

### TRELAWNY AND BORROW

We may compare him not unfruitfully with George Borrow, and the pair of them, both Cornishmen, were the last of the *Picaros,* or perhaps the last but one now that the author of the *Autobiography of a Super-Tramp* has been gathered to the fireside. They came at the tail-end of an illustrious if motley company—Don Quixote, Gil Blas, Elizabethan Nash's Jack Wilton, Benvenuto Cellini and Autolycus. All these vagabond heroes, whether in books or their own persons, and however widely separated in personality and purposes, wear in their hats the recognisable plume of the picaro. The race is extinct now, for the motor road and the standardisation of culture that follows it have left little or no room for the oddities and waywardness of the unconforming character, any more than for the out-of-the-way places wherein he finds his proper setting. The picaro shouldering his pack would nowadays be either an advertisement for a highbrow revival of an ancient craft or he would simply be run over.

It is the mark of the true picaros not to create new kingdoms of imaginative truth, in the manner of Shelley, Blake, Milton, Wordsworth and Thomas Hardy, but to draw their heady brew out of the depths of their own lives and actual experiences. Your picaro is an autobiographist or he is nothing. The general public recognises this, and with undiscerning tyranny clamours for the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It forgets that the knight, tinker, pirate or shady customer errant, "wandering companionless among the stars that have a different birth," is something more than this, he is also an artist. His own life is the raw material of his books, but he is a story-teller, not an accountant. Since his business is to make fact stranger than fiction, he is bound to use a certain element of fiction in making the very best out of his facts. A true work of art is always in a way more intense and real than life itself, because it selects the most telling, dramatic, and significant elements of life—those that occur in life together with what is, from the artist's point of view, a lot of undifferentiated slag. The picaro, in turning his life into literature, always recognises that in making a photographic record of his adventures, he achieves dullness rather than verisimilitude. There is now no doubt whatever that Borrow did colour, heighten, and exaggerate a great deal of what he has told us in *Lavengro, The Romany Rye,* and even *The Bible in Spain.* Do we read him any less eagerly for that? We know or ought to know that, if he hadn't, we probably shouldn't read him at all. It is the same with Benvenuto Cellini. His vainglorious yarns would have been far less readable had they been more credible. They are strictly faithful to his own character, which reflects so clearly the form and pressure of the Renaissance—as it would have liked to see itself. And Trelawny's *Adventures of a Younger Son* are all the livelier (that is to say, more life-like) because they could not have happened precisely in the way they are related.

The *Younger Son,* as we shall see later, owes something to Fielding and Smollett, and Borrow's best work was written in the strong English tradition of Defoe, especially in its simple, graphic, sinewy idiom. For all his exuberant colouring, Trelawny sticks to his Jack Tar style, and it is intriguing that both of them published their work plump in the Victorian period, when an ornate and florid taste ruled supreme, whence all simple and powerful emotions were banished, and where gentility, which Borrow hated almost more than he did Popery, was the mode in literature as in life. An iron formalism, a rule-of-thumb conduct, damned all the springs of original life, and so both, though they enjoyed an otiose interval of literary fondling, remained virtually exiles from society. They fell back upon the pride and self-reliance of all lonely wanderers, and in our age, dominated by the machine which the Victorians created, though not quite so philosophically at home with it as they were, Borrow and Trelawny have become legendary figures, monuments, as Mr. Brailsford puts it, of "the rebellious will."

## NOT FICTION

Mr. Brailsford has written a very brilliant introduction to the *Younger Son* in Bohn's Popular Library,[1] but I think he is wrong to handle it *à la* Stevenson. The "true story," he says, has all the finish and unity of a work of art. All the machinery of tragedy and adventure is set in motion to bring the three protagonists together and all the machinery of accident and coincidence called out to prevent their separation:

> Driven apart in battle, divided by raging seas and tropical tempests, we never doubt they will meet again. Poisoned, wounded, and all but drowned, their lives threatened by all the perils of warfare, travel and intrigue, we know that they will cheat their fates until the moment comes in the last pages to close the saga, and assign to each an appropriate and violent end.

He goes still further in defending the *Younger Son* as a work of imaginative romance, because, he says, Trelawny is often at his best in describing scenes he does not profess to have witnessed, as, for instance, the adventures of the English sailor who became a princeling in a South Sea island. He then comes to the conclusion that Trelawny was a story-teller of genius who knew how to make fact glitter like fiction and fiction stand four-square with fact.

This is a method of approach which misses the true significance of the *Younger Son* and distorts its simpler but just as valuable actuality. As a matter of fact, Trelawny uses very little fictional mechanism, and that rather clumsily. The book possesses neither "unity" nor "finish" as a work of art; the resources of a quite elementary artifice are devoted solely to making the narrative consecutive and introducing variety into the arrangement of the several scenes. So primary a nature as Trelawny's sought the least elaborate tools for chipping himself out of the block. The *Younger Son* is wholly lacking in the studied coherence of *Treasure Island,* just as *Treasure Island* is debilitated in comparison with its force and originality. If we read it as objective fiction, we shall be faced all the way through with the writer's artistic inexperience. If we read it as autobiography, we shall marvel at the consummate use he has made of his personal experience. It is untrue, even grossly untrue to say, as Mr. Brailsford does, that "in some measure he possessed creative imagination." He was as totally devoid of it as he was of the opposite pole to it—conventional imitation. There are other stories in the book besides that of the English sailor who became a princeling which are related with as masterly a touch as are those in which Trelawny himself took part. But he did not invent a single one of these stories; they were one and all described to him, and with the rarest journalistic skill wedded to his native fire he has reported them.

---

[1] The book had a wide vogue. In France, it was translated and adapted with the title of *Un Cadet de Famille* and Dumas himself wrote an introduction to it. It first appeared in his journal, *Le Mousquetaire*. A German translation appeared at Leipzig in 1832 and the book was piratically issued as a two volume edition in New York two years later. The first edition failed in England, but it was afterwards reissued in Colburn's Family Library. In 1835, it appeared among Bentley's Standard Novels and was reprinted four times in all. See Bibliography.

As autobiography, the *Younger Son* is a masterpiece; as romance, it is inchoate and bears no more relation to a perfected work of art than a cinema film to a fresco. The extraordinary character of the incidents described depends upon the man, not upon the creative ferment of his mind. The whole of his art is summed up in his personal contact with experience, and the immediacy of that contact is his virtue as an artist. Like Dumas, but without his panoramic or inventive powers, he was a purely instinctive writer, and not only was the style the man, but so were the drama and scenario.

That indeed is the stable argument for the veracity of the *Younger Son* and so for the truthfulness of Trelawny. The answer to his reputation for falsehood is that he could not have been a liar if he had wanted to. Nobody can possibly overlook what has truly been called the "surpassing literary merit" of the *Younger Son,* and that is merely an oblique way of testifying to its truth. Had the contact with experience been devious or second-hand, the literary quality was bound to suffer. The man at the opposite literary pole to himself was Poe, who excelled as a liar; it was impossible for Trelawny to excel unless he did tell the truth. It is curious that this quite simple and valid point has not saved him from the critical suspicion in which he is held today, for what evidence has he ever given of the subtlety and complexity necessary for sustained deception? Nobody doubts the verisimilitude of the *Recollections;* critics are giving him too much in regarding him as capable of writing a type of imaginative history in his earlier book different from it in character. As a matter of fact, he omitted more stories than he decorated. He does not relate, for instance, how on board his first ship in the Navy, the officers tried to force him to swallow liquor and how he defended himself successfully by main strength. He told this story to his daughter and his daughter told it to me. If the events recorded in the *Younger Son* are but the stock-in-trade of a novel of adventure, why are the scarcely more credible ones of his Grecian campaigns as told in the *Recollections* accepted as actual? Trelawny's sole stock-in-trade was himself; the mistakes he made in his life came through trading himself, not literary wares. The incidents recorded in the *Younger Son* only taste tinned when he is overacting. But in themselves they taste like fruit straight off the tree. Trelawny was a truthful writer because he could not help himself; we can usually detect his lying from its very transparency.

We may be the more convinced of his good faith, not of any moral purpose but in the instinctive innocence of his constitutional make-up, because he was himself exactly like what one claims his autobiography to have been. Put in the simplest terms, Trelawny was a romantic who romanticised himself. He made the very most of what he instinctively was, and so exposed himself, as we shall see in the next chapter, to the ferocious satire of Byron. He was such good hunting for Byron from the very naïveté of his self-dramatisation. But the authenticity of his inward romantic nature is not to be questioned; he was quite unlike Byron, who pretended to be the reverse of what he really was, and consciously cut himself off from his nature. What Trelawny did was to put his nature on the stage.

### THE MAN AND HIS BOOK

I think that this is the proper way of assessing both the artistic and biographical values of the *Younger Son*. We should view it in terms of Trelawny himself, and observe the same processes of externalisation at work. If we accept what he himself says about its object and genesis, and regard it as an extension upon the plane of literature of his own particular expression as a human being, everything falls into place. His aim in life was to add a cubit to his natural stature; in literature to adorn, colour and plume up the facts of his experience. It is because the *Younger Son* is true to his essential nature that it makes so living a book, so that for all his simplicity Trelawny has made a real working partnership between life and truth. The beginning and end of his power as a writer lay in describing, and indeed in dressing-up what had actually occurred, just as all his successes and failures in life are to be measured by his aptitude for both expressing and exploiting that force of peremptory, primitive and sometimes barbaric vitality within him. He was a wonderful observer of phenomena that interested him and in which he played or could play an individual part. All through his life Trelawny made the most of himself—even too much of himself, though he did not succeed except in his love of Shelley in making the best of himself by going beyond himself. That is why the *Younger Son* is autobiography; it could not by the nature of its author be anything else.

The parallels between the man and his literary first-born are endless. How Byron, if he had lived to read it, would have indulged his saturnine humour upon the parade of nautical knowledge throughout the seafaring chapters! Trelawny knew that a deck wasn't called a floor, nor rigging string, but it is doubtful whether his technical *expertise* in sailoring extended much further than that of an average victim of the Press Gang after his first voyage. One can see Trelawny at Pisa playing the youthful mariner, like a walking ship's log, just as he does in his book. Its local colouring, on the other hand, is on the whole as precise as it is glowing with life, as his own wild natural independence was so much more impressive than all the fuss he made about it. The book moves at a pace as breathless as were his own impulses and precipitance in acting upon them. The curious intermingling in his character between staginess and a bare primitive reality is echoed and mimicked in the lean virility, the pungent brevity of the language and the frequent bombast of the sentiments it expresses. It is amazing how well these brusqueries of style tone with the profuse colouring of the narrative, and even with the raw declamation of much of the dialogue. Like the simple Porthos, our adventurer could not resist finery—all finery except that of speech—and there the style was truly the inner man. No book could assimilate this mixture of beans and bravura, homeliness and flamboyance, were it not a brew native to the author. It is a book as fiery, mettlesome, cantankerous and rugged as himself, and it is a book which shopwindows these qualities as he did himself.

"The excesses I was guilty of," he writes, "arose from my volcanic materials, which were fired like powder, from any accidental spark, though struck by an ass's hoof. In everything I undertook, no matter how ridiculous, I must out-Herod Herod, brooking no compeer." And again, "False lights have distorted the fairest and brightest scenes of my existence; converting that which was really good and beautiful to blackness, and leading me to act the characters I most depised." One can imagine how inflammatory these materials were for what could be the hellish fires of Byron's scorn!

We may take it, then, that the *Younger Son* is genuine autobiography and untrustworthy only in respect of its author's indifference to the minutiae of fact and readiness to paint up and dramatise the reality.

## § II

### "THE ADVENTURES OF A YOUNGER SON"

In thus rescuing him from the devil of untruth have we not cast him into the deep sea of violence and villainy? We must discount something for the "hero-villian" convention of the Renaissance dramatists, a part very palatable to this belated Elizabethan. Trelawny was a primitive character, as Shelley was, but his Eastern adventures were more barbarian than primitive, which is a very different thing. There is little doubt that he did desert the Navy, as he himself relates, loathing its harsh discipline, outraged at the savage indignities put upon its crews and in the end finding the bondage intolerable. But he joined it at his father's will, not his own, and his values were not those of the United Services Club. He owed in his own conscience a far deeper loyalty to freedom than to institutions or a forced patriotism, and he believed not in making the best of a bad job but that what was not worth doing well was not worth doing at all.

### THE PRIVATEER

As for his privateering with de Ruyter and so incidentally under the French flag, and preying upon the commerce of the East India Company, here again his devotion was individual rather than national. Trelawny radically did not care under what flag he served, so long as it was the flag of freedom, and in the early nineteenth century England was as much responsible for the militarisation of France as the Terror and Napoleon himself, by diverting the energies of the French people from social re-creation to national defence and so fostering conditions favourable to the advent of the Napoleonic scourge. And, all prejudice aside, was there morally a penny to choose between unofficial privateering and orthodox colonial expansion in the nineteenth century? The predatory exploits of the one were endorsed by the law and blessed by the Church, while those of the other dispensed with such reputable sanctions. At the time when Trelawny was voyaging in the Indonesian Archipelago, Progress was summoning its Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse—Birmingham, brandy, bullets and the Bible—to go forth and shower the blessings of a godly civilisation upon the heathen. The period of native disease, decimation and carefully manufactured tribal wars was in consequence making its presence felt throughout the Indian Ocean and this was the world into which Trelawny plunged when he deserted the Navy at Bombay. There is no reason to doubt that his motives for aiding de Ruyter in defending the Malays from the land-grabbing both of the Dutch colonists and the East India Company were free from any element of personal gain. The pirate-philosopher, de Ruyter, was acting from revenge for the suppression of his tea-trade by the Europeans, and made a crusade of it, but Trelawny himself naturally gravitated towards any tribe, community or band of brethren who (preferably by violent means) resisted despotism.

### FAMILY INFLUENCE

Trelawny has no doubt exaggerated his own barbarism in the East; that was Byronic good form. It is when the *Younger Son* is read as autobiography that we are enabled to trace the sources of such of that barbarism as was true, and regard it as more acquired than instinctive. What is impossible to exaggerate is the demoralising influence upon him of his family upbringing. "My birth was unpropitious"—these bodeful words open the book. He was the younger son of a family "so proud of their antiquity that even gout and mortgaged estates were traced . . . as ancient heirlooms of aristocratic origin." In such a house a younger son "was like the cub of a felon-wolf in good King Edgar's days, when a price was set upon his head." The trouble began when his father deserted the girl who loved and was beloved of him in order to marry "a dark masculine woman of three-and-twenty" who was wealthier and more socially desirable than she was. The marriage ruined him in humanity while it prospered him in social advancement. He became a "prudent" man, and when the poor visited him, proclaimed his "duty to his wife and children."

In such happy auspices was Trelawny born and lived his childhood. In contradistinction to his tractable brother, he "would not be controlled." "I hated all that thwarted me, parsons, pastors and masters." His father's response was to apply to him the methods and mentality of a horse-breaker, and between them was fought a vendetta of such bitterness that it left its mark upon him in all the questionable actions of his subsequent life. The hideously graphic story of how he strangled the morose and hoary raven his father kept to guard the fruit from his sons is a measure of how furious was the struggle between them, the one to plant the bit, the other to reject it. "We had all, from the time we could walk, considered him (the raven) and my father the two most powerful, awful and tyrannical persons on earth."

At nine, he was sent to a penitentiary, dubbed by courtesy a school, for stealing apples, his father committing him to the tender mercies of the pedagogue with the words: "He is savage, incorrigible! Sir, he will come to the gallows, if you do not scourge the devil out of him." He had changed one father for another and "every kind and gentle feeling of my naturally affectionate disposition seemed subdued by the harsh and savage treatment of my master. I was sullen, vindictive, or insensible." In this "House of Correction" he spent two years, and was finally expelled for assaulting his tutor. He returned to find his father had inherited a new fortune which made him more economical than ever. When young Edward gave a beggar-woman a pigeon-pie, dish and all, she was honest fool enough to return the dish, whereupon she was threatened with transportation and he clouted and beaten until his father's hands and feet were weary. He meted the same treatment to his other children, even his daughter, and when she fell into the wine-cellar and lay there bleeding, "without speaking a word he kicked and cuffed her out of the cellar and gloomily decanted what wine remained in the broken bottles."

Such was the inspiring example of a prosperous marriage and the home influence of its family consequences upon the boy Trelawny. The one advantage he derived from them was his lack of education. If his heart was warped and his body horny with blows, at least his native originality was intact.

HATRED OF AUTHORITY

It was this which saved him when the brutality of the Navy gave the finishing touches to the outlaw family life had made. The influence of the Romantics combined with the circumstances of his boyhood and his native independence to endow him with a hatred of authority which lasted him to the extremity of his old age. It was Navy and family together which distracted his revolutionary passion into violent and wasteful ends. It was good for him to see that

> they (the powers that be) continue following the beaten track, and perpetuating a system, no matter how corrupt. . . . For everyone opposes with hate everyone that purposes an alteration, because it implies that everyone has hitherto been in error. . . . Reformers, in all ages, whatever has been their object, have been unpitied martyrs; and the multitude have evinced a savage exultation in their sacrifice.

It was very bad for him to have been initiated into these truths through the dark ordeals that anticipated them.

Their effect is scattered all over his book, both in words and in deeds. "The intense fire which burned in my brain is extinguished, leaving no trace but the deep lines prematurely stamped on my brow. Yet even now the mere memory of what I suffered rekindles the flame, and I burn with indignation." On the voyage to the East Indies in the King's ship, he reports with relish what the Scotch lieutenant said of him—"a cheald of the deil, capable of any atrocity," and, though that is an obvious Gasconism on his part, he was encouraged to overweigh his rebellious metal, and to alloy it by artifice from the very reality of those sufferings. In a storm, he wrote: "I felt at home amidst the conflict of the elements. It was a kind of war; and harmonised with my feelings. The more furious the storm, the greater my delight." His bottle of wine had become insipid unless it was mulled. When he joined de Ruyter, he could in harrying the ships of the East India Company take revenge by proxy both upon his father's wealth and the Navy's oppressions, and exclaim, Little John beside his Robin Hood, "The world's mine oyster, which I with sword will open."

When he met and married his wild Arabian maid, how he preens himself on his escape from civilisation and yet confesses himself still branded by it in the words: "Here was I transformed, as by magic, from a friendless outcast reckless boy of the West, without tie or home, into a sea sheikh, Arab Mussulman—married!" Had Zela been a cannibal, he says, he would not have let her change her wildness. When his fat steward, Luis, whom he loved, was carried off by fever in Batavia roads, he addresses a panegyric to gout:

> Gout, apoplexy, dropsy and the stone, I laud, respect and salute with my hat off; for they are, in their nature, radicals, the fierce slayers of kings and priests, the grasping wealthy and the greedy glutton. When the parson robs the poor cottager of his corn and little pigs, though his conscience may never prick him, his great toe often does.

His friend, Aston, whom he first met on board the King's ship and subsequently rescued from a captured prize, was the first being, he says, who awakened tender feeling within him. "For I had begun to think the world was peopled by demons." But actually the worst effect of family despotism upon him was not so much to turn him into an Ishmael as to lead him to embrace with enthusiasm that false ideal of the Byronic outcast for which in later years Byron himself was to punish him so severely. It is curious how ill a star brooded over the intercourse between Byron and Trelawny, both by personal contact and literary influence.

It is important to lay stress upon this fouling of the waters in the earlier channels of their journey to the sea. None of the more severe critics of Trelawny ever mention it, and so confuse the effects of a bad environment with original sin. But those effects are readily perceptible. They accentuated the histrionic elements in his character in precisely the same way as did Byron's ridicule,[1] besides increasing his tendency to headstrong and overbearing acts. What his parental environment did was to overcharge an inherently rebellious temper which, without it, would have achieved that fruitfulness of expression whereof his great natural endowments gave positive promise. As it was, that environment was mainly responsible for the failure of his life to coördinate all his energies into the unity of self-government.

## THE ACTORS ON THE STAGE

The characters in the *Younger Son*—de Ruyter, Zela, the surgeon Van Scolpvelt, Luis the steward, the tigerishly brave Javanese prince who attacks his party on shore, even the more sketchy Aston and others—are as sharply dramatic and aboundingly alive as the dialogue and episodes. They are materialised from personal contact only less vividly than was Shelley himself and not the most mistrustful of Trelawny's critics can doubt that he once saw Shelley plain. It is as inconceivable that he could have invented them as he could Shelley. They are visualised, not imagined characters. I quote this very slight vignette of his commander on the voyage East as an illustration of his method of *reporting* the men and women he fell in with:

---

[1] See Chapter II.

> Our commander was a surveying captain, a little, pert, pragmatical fellow, and, like most little fellows, thought himself a very great man. The only thing I can remember of this small commander is, that he used to twist and screw his head aside to look up at me, and snarl; and then with words too big to find utterance from his diminutive mouth, shrilly say, "You overgrown monster, you logger-headed fellow, without sense or feeling, what are you idling here for, instead of attending to my commands?" He hated me because I was framed like a man, and I despised him because he so little resembled one. Sometimes he would jump on a carronade-slide to box the men's heads.

It is plain that Trelawny remembered Captain Pepper, as one might call him, because his Jack-in-the-box ways in authority afforded a strong contrast to his own massive strength in subjection.

The macabre figure of de Ruyter's surgeon, Van Scolpvelt, is much more elaborated. It is extraordinarily Smollett-like, and yet how would it be possible to imitate a Smollett character in fiction? The coarse bovine vigour of the original would be split up into a set of Jonsonian humours, and so abstracted from reality. But Van Scolpvelt is too real a grotesque to be second-hand literary goods; Trelawny must have read Smollett for light upon the surgeon rather than repainted a canvas stolen from the Smollett gallery:

> He had a small, dry, sapless body, then stripped for operating, which I could compare to nothing but a gigantic, russet-haired caterpillar. His wizened face was puckered up like a withered shaddock, or Chinese mandarin. His pate was bald,

> hedged around with long, wiry, reddish grey hair. The hair that should have been on his eyebrows, eyelids, and beard, having entirely deserted its several posts, was dotted about on his lank cheeks, chin and neck, the latter of which was as long as a heron's, and seemed covered with scorched parchment. Four or five irregular, yellow-crusted tusks boomed from his jaw, like the wild hog's; and his capacious mouth, and thin, fishy lips, were like a John Dory's. His eyes were small and sunken, with a mixture of light red, green and yellow.

The sadistic delight he took in carving experiments upon his wretched victims was mingled with a pedant's relish in old Dutch medical tomes with horrible representations of operating scenes. His hand

> was long and narrow, like the claw of a bird of prey, so utterly devoid of flesh, that on meeting him at night with a candle shaded between his palms, the light shone so clearly through them that I asked him to let me have the loan of the signal lantern he was carrying.

On one ghastly finger he wore "a huge silver-mounted, antique, carbuncle ring, embossed with cabalistic characters." Van Scolpvelt's disinterested passion for science and savage joy in surgical experiments make a congenial match of it, and with caustic economy of line Trelawny has transformed a set of observations into a thumbnail portrait of a living if nightmare being.

The portrait of Luis is equally full of "body":

> He is, in fact, a double man,—Dutch stock crossed by a Frenchman—a nondescript fellow, born at the Mauritius. He unites the characteristics of the two nations—the portentous belly and square beam of the Hollander with the wiry arms and legs of the Frenchman, like a hogshead of Schiedam on stilts. His face is a ludicrous compound of both parents; full and round as the pumpkin, and rubicund withal, with a

> Gallic nose, like a ripe old fig, the stalk uppermost, a mouth from ear to ear like the bat's, and heavy, flabby, moist lips, which, when gathered up in talk, display a long double row of ebonies, similar to the piles at the entrance of a Dutch dyke or canal, and, like that, ever ready to receive whatever is offered. His natural chin is ridiculously short, but, like his stomach, of a prolific nature, for it has shaken three reefs out—a mass of fat stuck on a thorough-bred French neck, long, bony, and arched out in the dromedary fashion. His head seems formed for nothing but a golden crown, as no covering with less ballast can stay on it in a breeze of wind, and, indeed, he goes by the name of *Louis le Grand.*

"I"

These portraits are of course drawn from without not from within; their painter's whole strength was in observation, not psychological insight. But they are by no means effigies; they do translate their physical characteristics into vital action. They move, and the parts they take upon the flying screen are true to their outward appearances. Certainly too in this book its progenitor fulfilled the destiny of his looks:

> I was six feet in stature, robust, and bony, almost to gauntness; and with the strength of maturity, I had the flexibility of limb which youth alone can give. Naturally of a dark hue, my complexion readily taking a darker from the sun, I was now completely bronzed. My hair was black, and my features perfectly Arab.[1]

Later, when de Ruyter's rakish and slatternly brig had arrived at Goa from Bombay,

> I rigged myself in loose dark trousers and purple vest with a high black cap of Astrakhan lamb's skin, a cashmere shawl round my waist, and a small creese (kris) stuck in it. My

---

[1] See Mary Shelley's description of Trelawny's personal appearance on pp. 187 and 189.

long, dark elf-locks were shaven off, with the exception of one, on the crown, by which the black-eyed houris were to haul me into paradise. A roll of betel-nut, properly chinammed (*sic*), stuck in, or was rather sticking out of my cheek. My teeth were dyed in the bright red colour of Chessmen; and my bare neck, arms, and ankles were well greased and highly polished. The men gathered around in congratulation, declared unanimously that I must be, that I was, decidedly Arab, and even went so far as to demand who was my father, and of what tribe.

That, one feels, is what the author of the *Younger Son* ought to have looked like. We may say indeed that the difference between Trelawny's first description of himself and the second exactly measures the distance between his book as a true reflection of his adventures and costumed as he finally chose it to appear. His portraits [2] show that his finely chiselled features, with small hawk-like rather than aquiline nose, blue eyes set deeply in their orbits and highly expressive lips, "slightly writhen," as William Rossetti described them, tallied with Mary Shelley's pen-picture of him. He must have been the spit of Othello, as a stage-manager would have had him appear in such a way as not to alienate the sympathies of an English audience, and it is to be recalled that Byron cast him for the part of the Moor. It was only to be expected that Trelawny, thus furnished by nature, together with massive frame and enormous hardihood, thus exiled as a consequence of the evil marriage of his parents and cast into the vertiginous atmosphere of freebooting among the Indonesian islands, should wish to appear before the world like a modern sheikh of the bookstalls rather than be content with himself as he was.

---

[2] See Appendix VI.

226862

ZELA

Zela, whose Arab father had been killed in the storming of a Maratti stronghold in Madagascar by de Ruyter's men, has possessed herself of most of the poetry and sensibility in the book. It is remarkable that Zela should be alive at all, for her mental conception was partly symbolical. Her courage and resource, her passion and all-giving fidelity were intended to exhibit a contrast with the elegant European womanhood, stifled by taboos, drilled by their mothers and governesses into deception and hypocrisy, and thrust as fashionable wares into the marriage market. To that end, she is placed in relief beside the wife of the Governor of Port St. Louis, "who was really a good creature . . . and wished me to put Zela under her tuition; that she might be instructed in what this lady called the rules of civilised society, declaring she would be a gem of the first water, if set and polished." But Zela was not to be cultivated into a greenhouse morality, and her captor, lover and husband determined "to leave her wild and unreclaimed as she came from the deserts." It is interesting that this same resolve is paralleled in his relations with his Greek wife, Tersitza, who was separated from him because of her persistence in wearing Parisian dresses,[1] and in his exhortations to the tutors of their daughter, Zela, to leave her native dress unchanged. But Zela was not left to her Arabic robes; she was clothed in the cap of liberty and the revolutionary sentiments of the Romantics.

In spite of this substitution of one type of millinery for another, Zela emerges warm and living. He has left us this Shelley-tinctured but spontaneously vernal description of her:

---

[1] See Chapter V.

> She had just turned her fourteenth year [again, a reminiscence of Tersitza]; and though certainly not considered, even in the East, as matured, yet forced like a flower, fanned by the sultry west wind, into early development, her form, like its petals bursting through the bud, gave promise of the rarest beauty and sweetness. Nurtured in the shade, her hue was pale, but contrasted with the date-coloured women about her, the soft and transparent clearness of her complexion was striking; and it was heightened by clouds of the darkest hair. She looked like a solitary star unveiled in the night. The breadth and depth of her clear and smooth forehead were partly hidden by the even silky line from which the hair rose, fell over in rich profusion, and added to its brightness; as did the glossy, well-defined eyebrow, boldly crossing the forehead, slightly waved at the outer extremities, but not arched. Her eyes were full, even for an Orientalist, but neither sparkling nor prominent, soft as the thrush's. It was only when moved by joy, surprise or sorrow, that the star-like iris dilated and glistened, and then its effect was most eloquent and magical. The distinct ebon-lashes which curtained them were singularly long and beautiful; and when she slept they pressed against her pale cheeks, and were arched upwards.
>
> That portion of the eye, generally of a pearly whiteness, in hers was tinted with a light shade of blue, like the bloom on a purple grape, or the sky seen through the morning mist. Her mouth was harmony and love; her face was small and oval, with a wavy outline of ineffable grace descending to her smooth and unruffled neck, thence swelling at her bosom, which was high, and just developing into form. Her limbs were long, full, and rounded, her motion was quick, but not springy, light as a zephyr.

Thus tenderly limned, she reminds us, with a savour of incongruity, of Lamb's Quaker maid:

A sprightly motion in her gait,
A rising step, did indicate
Of pride and joy no common rate.

This is the memoried pattern of a living woman; how far she was composite, being mingled with Tersitza, there is no telling.

The shipmate of de Ruyter took her on his expeditions, by land and by sea; she rescued him from the attack of the Javanese prince and he her from a tiger in Borneo. When a simoom wrecked his ship, she saved his life by throwing him a rope in the boiling surge; she held his sword for him when he was crushing a mutiny, and nursed him when he was wounded until she dropped unconscious from exhaustion. In common they explored that rich and phantasmagoric world, sharing danger and idyll, hardship and retirement, shock and the quietude of woodcraft, gardening and reading at de Ruyter's country house in the mountains above St. Louis, where in a land of slaves, only freedmen were the tenants.

> My love for Zela knew no diminution. Every day I discovered some new quality to admire in her. She was my inseparable companion. I could hardly endure her out of my sight an instant; and our bliss was as perfect as it was uninterrupted. My love was too deep to fear satiety; nor did ever my imagination wander from her, to compare her with any other woman. She had wound herself about my heart till she became a part of me. Our extreme youth, ardent nature, and solitude, had wrought our feeling of affection towards each other to an intensity that perhaps was never equalled, assuredly never surpassed.

If Zela's positive existence has ever stood in question with the sceptic readers of the West, this last sentence should dispel the doubt. It is an affidavit to her reality, for he would not have troubled to tell us how their ardours passed all common measure, had she but walked among the glades of the Faerie Queen. Trelawny's adventures were lived among the Superlative Mountains; his seven-league boots were unobtainable from any shoemaker's; they had to be made for him.

De Ruyter-Odysseus is more shadowy than Zela-Tersitza, and Trelawny has a thorny task in reconciling his humanitarianism with his rapacity. He is too prone to utter lofty moral sentiments and detonating curses upon tyranny for human representation; he presides over the book like the giant Theban statues of the Pharaohs, casting a shadow a mile long, and looms rather than lives. A mind that worked on the immediate scene or impression, with many a meaty and forcible simile to lend it flavour, was less at home with any figure that escaped the concrete.

### THE SPRINGS OF INSTINCT

Such is the *Adventures of a Younger Son,* a book of high and hectic adventure dressed in honest kitchen smock, wherein the salt of the sea is mingled with the odour of musk, among whose pages the bombastic and the natural get on so well together and over which Hogarth and Shelley utter a kind of joint epilogue. All of its heterogeneous elements are welded into a whole, not in the unity of a work of art but through the individual spell of its creator. His instinctive force dominates it throughout and gives to its wildest incidents and scenes a local habitation and a name. That force is so genuinely imperious as to deserve the name of genius and to contend with all the absurd artifices he employed to swell it out and make it look bigger than it was. Most of Trelawny's critics have only seen the crudities of that make-believe, and have stopped short of the original power behind it. That is largely his own fault, for if ever a man belittled himself in his pretentions to greatness, it was Trelawny. That should not blind us to the stature of the real man who impressed a passionate vitality upon the pages of the *Younger Son,* who suffered so deeply at the hands of Byron and was the first to give the world the portrait of Shelley as he was.

# CHAPTER II

## *THE PIRATE AND THE PILGRIM*

> *False lights have distorted the fairest and brightest scenes of my existence; converting that which was really good and beautiful to blackness, and leading me to act the characters I most despised.*
>
> —TRELAWNY

### § 1

### WITH BYRON IN ITALY: FIRST MEETING

THE day after Trelawny's first meeting with Shelley, immortally recorded in the *Recollections,* the pair of them crossed the Ponte Vecchio and proceeded along the Lung 'Arno on their way to Byron's residence, the Palazzo Lanfranchi, where he had established himself after leaving Ravenna at the end of 1821. First, a spacious marble hall, then a giant staircase, after that a room as large as and over the hall, and lastly a smaller apartment with books, a billiard table and a surly bulldog, admitted them to the Pilgrim's presence. Though his halting gait was perceptible, he moved rapidly, and though his face was pale, "he looked as fresh, vigorous and animated as any man I ever saw." Pride and solitude made him embarrassed with strangers, but he put on an affectation of ease, recovered himself after an interchange of commonplaces and asked Shelley to go and read a letter from Tom Moore together with the versicles he was delivered of the night before.

Trelawny remained to play billiards with him, but Byron cared not a rush for the game, and told idle and pointless tales about his days at Constantinople and the Dardanelles in Captain Bathurst's frigate:

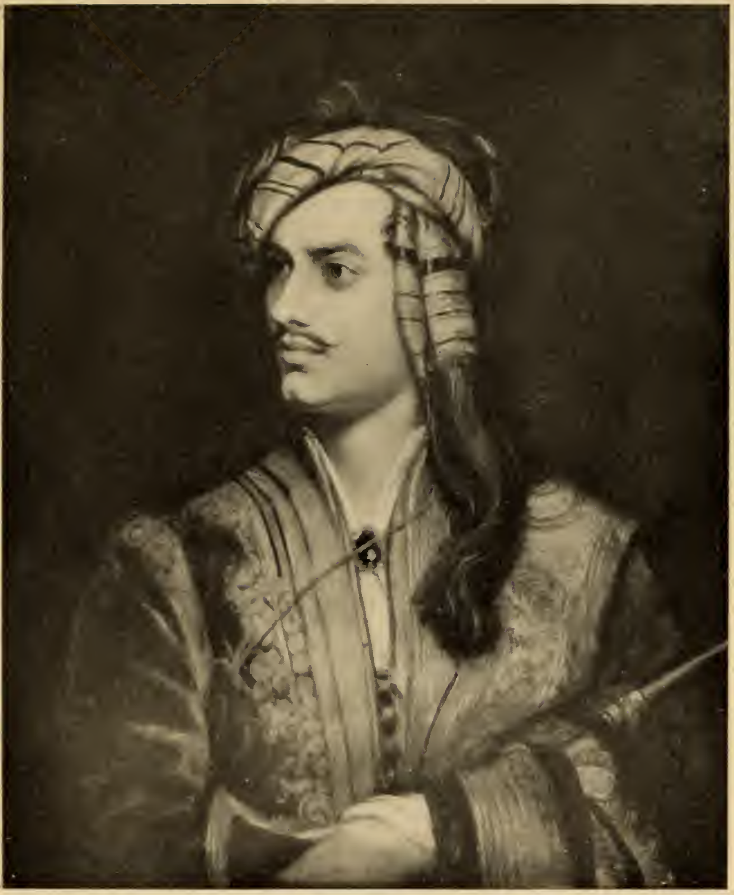
> The surprise I expressed by my looks was not at what he said, but that he could register such trifles in his memory. Of course with other such small anecdotes, his great triumph at having swum from Sestos to Abydos was not forgotten. I had come prepared to see a solemn mystery, and so far as I could judge from the first act it seemed to me very like a solemn farce. I forgot that great actors when off the stage are dull dogs; and that even the mighty Prospero, without his book and magic mantle, was but an ordinary mortal. At this juncture Shelley joined us; he never laid aside his book and magic mantle; he waved his wand, and Byron, after a faint show of defiance, stood mute, his quick perception of the truth of Shelley's comments on his poem transfixed him, and Shelley's earnestness and just criticism held him captive.

While the Poet and the Pilgrim were deep in their discussion, Byron not disputing Shelley's arguments but keeping his end up with mental vivacity, great powers of memory and a wealth of illustration and quotation from modern authors, Trelawny had leisure to examine the most talked-of man in Europe. He was in the prime of life (thirty-five), of middle height and regular features "without a stain or furrow on his pallid skin," with broad shoulders, open chest and finely proportioned limbs. "His small, highly finished head and curly hair, had an airy and graceful appearance from the massiveness and length of his throat; you saw his genius in his eyes and lips. Nature could have done little more for him, both in outward form and the inward spirit which animated it." But his jaundiced imagination only served to make the contrast between these rare gifts and his lameness more apparent to him, and brooding upon this defect caused him to be sceptical, cynical and savage. He wore loose nankeen trousers, strapped down so as to hide his feet, and a blue velvet cap with a gold band, rather like, as Mr. Harold Nicolson has told me, a French schoolboy's grotesque headgear.

The party then went off riding on very middling horses covered in trappings, Byron driving in his calèche till they were clear of the town, to avoid being gaped at by the "damned Englishmen" touring Pisa. They stopped at a wayside inn, practised pistol-shooting at a half-crown stuck into the slit of a cane, and then returned. Meanwhile, Byron and Shelley talked before the attentive listener, who noted their wide respective differences. Murray, said Byron, had urged him to resume his "old Corsair style to please the ladies," and Shelley took him up with warmth. This was good logic for a bookseller whose shop interest was to supply the ephemeral demand of the day, but not for an author. Byron smilingly defended himself, "but when I am forty," he said, "I will write no more for women but for men." Do it now," replied Shelley vehemently:

> Write nothing but what your conviction of its truth inspires you to write; you should give counsel to the wise, and not take it from the foolish. Time will reverse the judgment of the vulgar. Contemporary criticism only represents the amount of ignorance genius has to contend with.

Though all who heard Shelley were subdued by his simple earnest manner, Trelawny was pleased and surprised at Byron's docility in listening to him. Byron paid deference to Shelley's exemption from the "egotism, pedantry, coxcombry, and, more than all, the rivalry of authorship," and knew him to be the most discrimi-



LORD BYRON

FROM A PAINTING BY THOMAS PHILLIPS, R. A., IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

nating of his critics. Just before they reached the Palazzo Lanfranchi, Byron glanced at the western sky, and mocked at the "fustian" of the "Laker" (Coleridge) in describing the "peculiar tint of yellow green" in a sunset. "Who ever saw a green sky?" Shelley was silent, knowing that to reply would be to provoke his spleen, but Trelawny took him up—"The sky in England is oftener green than blue." "Black, you mean," rejoined Byron. Trelawny, however, mollified him by commenting on the good rhyming in a couplet he quoted from *Don Juan,* and Byron advised him to look into Swift—"he beats us all hollow, his rhymes are wonderful." "And then we parted for that day, which I have been thus particular in recording, not only as it was the first of our acquaintance, but as containing as fair a sample as I can give of his appearance, ordinary habits, and conversation."

### FIXED OPPOSITION

Thus Trelawny on his first meeting with Byron. His chapter describing it appoints the key and sets the tempo for all his published reminiscences upon the "Pilgrim." But its importance is not content with that. The secret of the psychological relations between the two men lies in that description of their first encounter, which sheds a strong light upon their differences of character, and still more of representative attitude to life. Trelawny, however imperfectly and at times absurdly, lived in and for the romantic tradition. Byron, between the marriage of Mary Chaworth and the last phase, was a realist. The romantic face he put upon the world, both in life and letters, was mainly but a costume part, and I confess it greatly surprised me that

Miss Mayne, in her most attentive study of Byron, should have persistently labelled him as a romantic. Thus Trelawny's first and enduring impression of Byron was one of disenchantment.

## SHOCK

Imagine that contact between the enervated sensationalist, tired out with his masquerade with the world, disillusioned, tortuous, ironical, contemptuous of every generous emotion, especially when it came from himself, —and the Wild Man of Borneo, full of gusto and enthusiasms, rushing in agog to heroise the great man, and aware of him only as the parent of *Lara, Manfred, Childe Harold* and the other musqueteers *contra mundum.* It was not merely a meeting; it was a veritable collision.

Trelawny little knew what a hornet's nest he had put his head into. The shock to him must have been no less than prodigious. That it was so is proved by the critical tone he used in writing of Byron in the *Recollections;* still more so by those various incidents of his association with him which are so difficult to explain and have earned the censure of all Byron's biographers. I believe that all these incidents—his eagerness for Byron to go to Greece, his hasty departure from him when he got there, his examination of Byron's foot after his death at Missolonghi, his misinterpretation of the extent of the natal injury, his bitter tormented letter to Mary Shelley a week later, and other happenings betraying a kindred condition of mind—can only be accounted for by this primary shock and its results and repercussions upon his mind. Without some central clue to the solution of the problem as to why they occurred, Trelawny is left ignominiously in the air. He can only bewilder us as Byron bewildered him.

Let us advance one step further. Trelawny's first meeting with Byron was a shock to his expectations. What he expected to find was the author of the romantic poems he had doubtless absorbed like a thirsty eland at a water-hole. What he did find was the precise opposite in every particular of the romantic hero of his excited vision. Here was not an arch-Manfred but a Thersites, not a hero but a jester, not a crusader but a cripple, not a Childe Harold but a supercilious man of the world, full of prosaic poses and affectations at utter variance with what he conceived should have been his true character. Instantly he recoiled, in distaste, in bewilderment, in dismay.

### THE BULLRING

What of the effect upon Byron? As electrifying in its way as Byron's effect upon Trelawny. Here in fact was a very gift of the gods, a real live wild man of the woods, strutting about as his Lara and expecting *him* to play up to the part his potential homage dictated. It was monstrous, irresistibly ludicrous, and above all an opportunity which hardly the most commonplace of men would miss. The subtle Byron seized it, and, as one reads between the lines of the *Recollections*, he seized it with a relish insatiable, a tireless response to the occasion. He took advantage of his credulous savage with a rapacious zest, and exploited the ideal game that lay to his hand as acidly, as pitilessly as his victim lay open to his dark malice. He was not teasing Trelawny, unless the darts of the agile picador, sticking in the flesh of the ponderous and harassed bull, can be called scores in the play of badinage between them. Here was much prettier sport for him than shocking the bourgeoisie of Upper Tooting or even piercing the hides of moralising Scotch pedants.

The innocence, the absurdity, the naïve posturings and attitudinisings of his helpless prey were so much fuel to that baleful fire of ridicule which consumed the incendiary alike with the victim of it. But if this choice food was satisfying to his perverse appetite, a richer boon to this mental voluptuary was Trelawny's shock at finding him so very different a being from what he had so confidently looked for. Byron must at once have become aware of this, grasped its full sporting possibilities and exploited them as mercilessly as he did the romantic convictions of the Gargantuan child. How then could he extract the rarest savour from his would-be apostle's bewildered recoil? Surely by appearing in his eyes the reverse of what was expected of him. Turn over the pages of the *Recollections* and Trelawny's Byron is bodied forth in them as he would himself in his cruel sardonic humour have delighted to appear. His bonito was hooked.

The effect of this interplay between the two men was, I think, extremely injurious to them both. Its reactions upon Trelawny will appear in the course of the narrative; upon Byron they were even more destructive to his finer nature. It is curious that none of Byron's biographers have observed the deteriorating influence of Trelawny upon Byron throughout the Pisa and Genoa period, and how, quite unconsciously, his wild man aggravated his artificialities. Mr. Drinkwater, in his very careful book, *The Pilgrim of Eternity,* comes nearest to it, but he is preoccupied with Trelawny's injustice to Byron. Of course he was unjust; what else in the circumstances could he have been? He saw Byron as Byron wished himself to be presented; that was the point of the joke. But it was a joke that flew back upon the jester and dealt him a shrewder blow than it struck the jestee. The truth is that Trelawny was both just and unjust to Byron; while Byron both missed and exposed Trelawny. Neither of them was, yet both of them were what each thought of the other. But of the two, in spite of all the hidden resentment of Trelawny's attitude to Byron and of his subsequent unfairness and even callousness to him, he comes humanly best if intellectually nowhere out of the conflict between them.

Nor is Byron a whit less ridiculous than Trelawny. He idealises his own fatalistic, not to mention Calvinistic, portrait of himself in the figure of Conrad the Corsair, the dauntless outlaw who is the noble foe not so much of men as of the savage deity who created them to suffer—and when Conrad in person (as he saw him) strides into his ken, all pent up for homage, he greets him with withering scorn! It was ridiculous and yet understandable, for the guileless Trelawny affronted Byron in many devious ways. In Trelawny Byron saw his own literary past come to life, the past with which he was now so disgruntled and which had earned him so much suffering. There was in Byron, too, a strongly marked streak of the conventional both in religion and in morals. It was loaded by his upbringing and must have made his exile doubly painful to him, as one can see in many passages of *Don Juan.* Trelawny was not merely unconventional; he drove a coach and four through every orthodoxy and with a whip-cracking that surely infuriated Byron into a steely resolve to give the coachman a taste of his own whip.

But it was the Pirate's romantic mannerism which was the worst offender in his eyes. M. Maurois truly says of Byron that when he declared himself a fallen angel, he was right: "There did exist within him all the elements of the angel, but so false had he found men that a horror of hypocrisy had emerged as his dominant sentiment." His early generosity of temperament, which re-emerged so wonderfully only in the last year of his life, was stunted and then twisted into a morbid growth by his experience of the world, until to his vexed gaze it was peopled by shams and he detected falsehood even in spontaneity and innocence. No wonder that the gawdy cock-of-the-rock caperings of Trelawny roused all his savagery; Trelawny was not only wedded to make-believe, but he had picked out the unpardonable costume of romance for his get-up. This was maddening because it touched Byron himself so nearly, the Byron both of noble and cheap sentiment, those two aspects of himself upon which he had declared war to the knife. An assumed romance was bad enough, but when it was the Byronic brand, it was intolerable. Trelawny repelled Byron from every point of the shifting compass of his being; he offended his pride and his honesty, his sincerity and his conventionality, his memories and his overwrought physical sensibility, his youth and his age, even that wariness and commonsense of which he was to make an at last fruitful use in the Greek campaign.

### BYRON'S VIEW OF TRELAWNY

The actual records of what Byron thought of Trelawny have to be plucked out of scattered sayings and chance gossip, some of it malicious and some of dubious authenticity. But one may gather a handful of meaning out of an obviously accurate passage of talk quoted in the *Recollections.* "Now confess," said Byron one day to Trelawny, "you expected to find me a 'Timon of Athens' or a 'Timur the Tartar'; or did you think I was a mere sing-song driveller of poesy . . . and are you not mystified at finding me what I am—a man of the world?" Here is Byron acutely conscious of Trelawny's bitter disappointment and taking full advantage of it, deriding the image-maker in the broken image, scorning both and delighting with a perverse relish to touch up the reality in more sombre colouring than was native to it. "In his perverse and moody humours," writes Trelawny, "Byron would give vent to his Satanic vein. After a long silence, one day on horseback, he began: 'I am now repenting, not of the few sins I have committed, but of the many I have not committed.'" Byron's involved and gloomily self-conscious character, infinitely more dissonant than dissolute, was now in full swing of treating the Pirate as fair game, stripping him of his illusions, confusing his perspective, making holes in his romance with a poisoned blade.

According to Mr. Nicolson in *Byron: The Last Journey* (1924), Byron thought Trelawny a "ridiculous ass." He was always trying to look like Lara, with all that fanfaronade of sham romanticism which that worldly sceptic hated. Why couldn't Trelawny behave quietly? Why all this cant about Causes and Liberty and Adventure? How he (Byron) loathed adventures! This is a just view of what Byron thought of Trelawny. It was certainly an unjust one of the man himself, who, whatever his gestures and gasconades, had at any rate lived his Lara instead of making him up as confectionary to a public whose taste in sheikhs has ridden secure above the changes in literary fashion.

Not only did Byron regard Trelawny as an egregious ass, he unquestionably put him down for an egregious liar. Dr. Kennedy, who, like Medwin, recorded Byron's wayward and provocative talk as though it were the pontification of a sage and whom Trelawny called "that old fool at Cephalonia with the pretty wife," tells a story to that effect in *Conversations on Religion with Lord Byron* (p. 297).[1] Trelawny had said to Byron, "we were two hours in the water last night." "Yes," said Byron pointedly, "by Shrewsbury clock." When Münchhausen tales were being told of feats of legerdemain in Paris, "You look incredulous, my lord," said Kennedy. "No, not at all," Byron replied, "Where is Trelawny? I daresay he saw the same thing." "If we could only make Trelawny wash his hands and speak the truth, we might make a gentleman of him," was his acid comment at another time. Fifty-five years after the great days at Pisa, the gullible W. Graham said to Claire Clairmont, "How he (Trelawny) hated Byron!" "Well," said Claire, "Byron snubbed him, you know: he said, 'Tre was an excellent fellow until he took to imitating my *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan*.' This got to Trelawny's ears and he never forgave Byron for it." [2]

This is practically the only more or less direct information we possess upon Byron's estimate of Trelawny. He only forgave Trelawny when he invited him to accompany him to Greece. But by that time Byron had gotten a new skin.

---

[1] This was the Kennedy referred to by Trelawny in a talk with Richard Edgcumbe: "Shelley was a man who would not only have replied to and controverted all Kennedy's theories and arguments, but he would have filled his heart with such doubts as would have made him miserable for the rest of his life."

[2] See Nicolson, *Byron: The Last Journey.*

The right way to deal with these glimpses, I think, is to accept them as a true picture not of Trelawny as he was but in contact with Byron and so posing for his portrait. His romanticised airs and heroics, his imitation of the Byron of his imagination, his stage-production of himself were all true enough and grist to Byron's mill. But they were by no means the whole truth, for this comic-opera Pirate of Penzance was mingled with the true romantic, with the simple, plain-spoken, blunt, caustic seaman, and with the man of poetic sensibilities who found Byron empty of them, venerated Shelley for his rich endowment in them and boomed Blake off by heart in his old age. The heroic and the braggadocio, the man of action and the play-actor all take their turns in a character who is yet simple because built on elemental lines.

### THE HAVOC OF INFERIORITY

It was this simplicity which was his undoing in Byron's company. Had he felt his way through to that most complicated being, pausing and testing the ground with his antennae as he advanced, had he been more imaginative and less maladroit, he would not have been so vulnerable to Byron's blowpipe. In other words, he would not have been Trelawny. As it was, he made the most perfect Aunt Sally for him, worth a round dozen of the Rogers and Southey brand. The picador planted his barbs with an ease that hardly needed address, and meanwhile what of the baffled bull?

The principal reaction that Trelawny suffered was necessarily a sense of inferiority. He would fear Byron's mind as the very devil of mischief, fear it in proportion to his respect for it, and that is why, I fancy, the *Recollections* insert many a tribute to the sniper's mental agility into the midst of criticisms which reveal Byron as a foil to Shelley, and very inferior to him as a man. Hardly one critic in twenty treats those criticisms very seriously. In that I think they are mistaken. Trelawny was obviously deficient in power of analysis; he was with other Romantics a critic of society, not of human beings. But his acute sense of inferiority in Byron's presence forced him to be critical as a measure of self-defence. Byron's marksmanship shot down his enthusiasms in flight, and drove him into cover and a circumspection of approach completely alien to his character. He became more penetrating than was his wont about Byron as a means of restoring his own self-esteem, shattered by the persistent grillings and baitings of his adversary. Byron sharpened his wits as abruptly as Byron opened his eyes. Byron slashed off his self-confidences and credentials one after the other, and he grew a new limb in exchange, one which enabled him still to walk and hold up a diminished head. That limb was perception.

Byron, again, paid the penalty of his own poses for Trelawny's benefit. He became more like them and less like himself. To capitalise these poses and keep them running as a paying concern, he drew his spending power from that authentic self and left it so much the poorer. It was a subtle punishment—that the fancy-dress worn as the livery of persecution should have become an integral expression of the wearer and so that he should actually have become what Trelawny's outraged response to that persecution declared him to be.

The deeper, more real Byron Trelawny saw not at all, or only in transitory gleams. How should he have done, when it was not there? But the Byron of 1822–3 must, in just nemesis, be taken at Trelawny's valuation. It is Trelawny who is the indispensable key to Byron in Italy.

But what he made up on the roundabouts he lost on the swings. It may be imagined how completely he was at the mercy where none was shown him of this dexterous duelist. His inferiority sense, whose name was hidden in his subconscious, would stick out of him like beads of sweat. No doubt he shivered with discomfort, became acutely self-conscious and so exaggerated his romantic mannerisms to their utmost pitch, glorifying himself in them from an abyss of dejection. His every gesture must have been laboured in the painful effort to regain his balance; every impressive exhibition of verbal audacity have betrayed how smalled he felt within. With terrific energy he must have melodramatised himself and overacted until Byron enjoyed the time of his life. Or he would fall silent, longing to be out of it as a Fiji Islander out of a club in Pall Mall. His inner consciousness all stands confessed in this poignant passage. Byron called the gliding, gently insinuating Shelley the Snake from Goethe's *Mephistopheles,* who named the Serpent, "My Aunt, the renowned Snake." "Byron was the real snake," writes Trelawny,

> a dangerous mischief-maker; his wit or humour might force a grim smile or hollow laugh from the standers-by, but they savoured more of pain than playfulness, and made you dissatisfied with yourself and him. When I left his gloomy hall, and the echoes of the heavy, iron-plated door died away, I

> could hardly refrain from shouting with joy as I hurried along the broad-flagged terrace which overhangs the pleasant river, cheered on my course by the cloudless sky, soft air and fading light, which close an Italian day.
>
> After a hasty dinner at my albergo, I hastened along the Arno to the hospitable abode of the Shelleys. There I found those sympathies and sentiments which the Pilgrim denounced as illusions believed in as the only realities.

What intensity of relief is in that lightning vignette! It was inevitable that Byron, in stripping bare those "illusions" and their brandisher with them, should have stripped himself before the eyes of his hapless critic.

Mr. Drinkwater complains that Trelawny was "studiously dishonest" in drawing the contrasts between the two poets so unfavourably to Byron. But what could he do? Shelley never made him feel like an inferior, and with his invariable generosity accepted him, mayhap with an inward smile, upon his own terms. He saw too the real Trelawny behind the romantic uniform, and Trelawny could in consequence be his own natural self in his company. Partly because of that he loved him, as he must in his heart have hated Byron, though I think that the *Recollections* show how honestly he strove to master that instinctive loathing and to a great extent succeeded in giving a dispassionate cast to his narrative, one most unusual to him. And that is to his lasting credit.

The throw-back of Trelawny's mind from Byron to Shelley and the sharp comparisons he made between them were doubtless personal in origin. With Shelley he found refuge from his own sense of inferiority. But in the recoil his critical faculties came into play, and he found himself daily confronted with the contrast not only between the Shelley who warmed to him and the

Byron who roasted him, but with the artless and natural character of the one and the artificial and egotistically conventional one of the other. He saw on the one side a life full and generous, on the other one stultified by conflicting currents, a genius ignored and one overfed with homage. He tasted companionship with a poet who hated the way of the world as a cloud upon life, and he was always being discomfited by another whose *odium vitae* was a mirror of his disgust with himself. What balm that contrast was to his flayed feelings! With genuine admiration for Byron he quotes *his* admiration for Shelley, the dues paid by the most famous to the most unpopular writer in Europe: "And Shelley too, the best and most benevolent of men; they hooted him out of his country like a mad dog, for questioning a dogma . . . and if the Christ they profess to worship reappeared, they would again crucify him." Trelawny also quotes what Byron wrote to Moore, after the "Ariel" had gone down. "There is another man gone, about whom the world was ill-naturedly, and ignorantly, and brutally mistaken. It will perhaps do him justice *now* when he can be no better for it." And again: "You were all mistaken about Shelley, who was, without exception, the best and least selfish man I ever knew." Did Trelawny recognise when he quoted those words that he was indirectly doing himself justice in the deference paid by the picador to the inspector for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals? Of course not, but can we doubt that it was so? Byron tore his gay trappings to shreds, and in return he wrote of Byron in the manner of the child in Andersen's *The Emperor's New Clothes*, with the wide-open surprise, the simple amazement of "Why, he's got nothing on!"

### THE MAN OF FASHION

Had we been present at one of those uncomfortable tragi-comedies at the Palazzo Lanfranchi, what would have occurred to us as the most masterly rôle Byron could assume to confound the disquieted loud-speaker who had called on him? Plainly, the man of fashion, who would represent the antithesis of what Byron ought to have been in Trelawny's expectations. That was just the impersonation he chose; it was his star-part. What could have been more distasteful to the Byronist than to see his Byron a *démodé* Regency fine gentleman, branded with the image of the wealthy society his works had defiled with such Trelawnian gusto? What could have roused him more than the spectacle of the herald to clarion revolt aping the stale rufflings of the gang whose sons in their social arrogance and fear had outlawed Shelley, starved and derided Keats and imprisoned Hunt? The devilish cunning of Byron instantly rose to the occasion.

So Trelawny wrote—Byron's conversation was anything but literary, it was seasoned with anecdotes of the "Mohawk" period and garnished with the slang and scandal of that forgotten day. "Byron, not knowing the tribe was extinct, still prided himself on having belonged to it; of nothing was he more indignant than of being treated as a man of letters, instead of as a Lord and a man of fashion." He describes the contrast between Shelley and Byron "in society," the former perfectly at ease because free from self-consciousness, and readily conversing with all and sundry "irrespective of age or rank, dress or address." The latter, on the other hand, was anxious as to the precise etiquette to be observed, the rules of precedence and the order of formalities. He was flushed, fussy, embarrassed, overceremonious, concerned about his deportment, and obsessed with his Regency mode, "when society was more exclusive than even now, and consequently more vulgar." He was so solicitous to cut a good figure that he marred his own worldly advantages by allowing his pride to be too conspicuous, a pride that was the reverse of Shelley's spiritual self-respect that carried him calmly on his way regardless of opposition.

There is no doubt that, if there was anything real at all about Byron at this period, it was his anxiety to appear as the opposite of what his own genius directed him to be. The persistent duality of his character led him to play an eternal game of chess with himself, checking every move of his own original spirit with its counter in terms of the world. No man ever waged a more relentless war upon himself than Byron, and Trelawny was right in continually placing him over against Shelley who, if he was at war with the whole world, was at radiant peace with his own nature.

### BYRON BEDEVILLED

In later years, Trelawny pretended to Richard Edgcumbe that Byron tried to shock other people than himself. But the whole point of the *Recollections* is the shock he administered to Trelawny. "Byron," he wrote in the *Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author,* a supplemented second edition of the *Recollections,* published twenty years after it (1878), "disenchanted me." He did indeed; that was Byron's object. There can be little doubt that Trelawny's often cynical reflections upon authors in the *Recollections* were the fruit of his intercourse with Byron:

> To know an author personally is too often but to destroy the illusion created by his works; if you withdraw the veil of your idol's sanctuary, and see him in his nightcap, you discover a querulous old crone, a sour pedant, a supercilious coxcomb, a servile tuft-hunter, a saucy snob, or, at best, an ordinary mortal. . . . As a general rule, therefore, it is wise to avoid writers whose works amuse or delight you, for when you see them they will delight you no more. Shelley was the grand exception to this rule.

The entertainment and pathos of that passage lie in its writer's rueful experience of the wisdom of avoiding Byron, whose works had sent him with such high expectations to the Palazzo Lanfranchi, and who retired from it with chastened crest and smarting skin. On May 4th, 1878, the *Athenæum,* in reviewing the *Records,* remarked upon its "cynicism." The eager buccaneer had dashed off to Pisa "to fraternise with the two most disreputable men at that time in Europe." From one of them he recoiled like a lion who had leaped on the point of a spear: "The cynicism is not that of Diogenes—not that of Northcote or La Rochefoucauld—but the cynicism of Timon—the cynicism that is born of crushed ideals, the cynicism of strangled enthusiasm."

Some critics maintain that the second edition bears more heavily upon Byron than the first; others with equal assurance advance the opposite point of view. Personally I cannot detect any real difference between them, except that the majority of the interpolations are of little value. The *Records* are more laboriously and so more dully written than the *Recollections,* but the increment to the Byron landscape in them shows little or no variation from the design drawn in the *Recollections*. There is no change of tone or key. We do not move forward from the chilly wind of early spring either to summer's flattery or winter's acerbity. As Trelawny at the time when he published the *Records* was writing a good deal less sternly of Byron in his letters, and defending him against Claire's unworn virulence, it is clear that he did not himself, more than fifty years after the events recorded, consider that he had done the Pilgrim injustice. On the authority of Mr. T. J. Wise I have the *raison d'être* of the *Records*. The Shelley revival of 1878 turned the attention of publishers to Trelawny's personal contact with the Pisan circle, and the old man, then eighty-five years of age, was literally badgered by Pickering and William Rossetti between them to issue an expanded new edition of the *Recollections*. They pressed his memory so hard that he ended by remembering too much. For light upon that strange, sinister and psychologically circuitous intercourse between the Pirate and the Pilgrim, the *Recollections* are our authentic guide.

In them we can trace how Byron's dualism of character responded more and more voluptuously to the bait of Trelawny, innocently dangled before him. Trelawny's romanticism accentuated the division between Byron's natural and artificial self, and fed his perverse delight in representing himself as the opposite of what he really was. Here was one actor over-impersonating himself as the romantic, and the other over-impersonating himself as the reverse of the romantic. It is easy to see how Byron, launched upon such a part, delighted in diabolising himself, and allowed himself to become more and more committed to those unrealities which distinguished his life in Italy. For a long time his pleasure had been in tearing all fair thoughts to fragments, and exposing himself for much worse than he was with that inverted honesty which took so destructive a form. His pantomiming had the worst effect on Trelawny, who was too simple to realise that the profound dualism in Byron had advanced so far as to become almost pathological.

That element can alone explain the curious savagery of his conduct in marriage and perhaps even his incest, and it was an element largely incubated by environment. If ever a man was bedevilled by his environment, it was Byron. Family upbringing, social connections and the prestige of rank and wealth, unction of parasites and sycophants, literary lionising, mercantile prosperity in a shoddy brand of letters (Murray records that £75,000 accrued from Byron's pen in ten years—"I think that proves he was a great poet") and a monstrous marriage wrought like bacilli upon his native endowment. The religious terrorism of his youth marked him for life. The fraudulence of his governess, Mrs. Gray, obsessed his mind with imposture, so that he became as wary and suspicious as a persecuted animal. His Calvinistic teaching peopled his thoughts with the malevolence of deity, whose victims were men and burnt sacrifice was hell. His impossible, if cruelly unfortunate mother falsified his ideas of women. He and Trelawny both were martyrs to the *patria potestas*. He is a pregnant example of the havoc that external surroundings and social institutions can work upon potential greatness. They made him as bankrupt in soul as Beau Brummel became in costume, and so divided him against himself that his every motion became make-believe.

Trelawny noted, for instance, his "fanfaron des vices qu'il n'avait pas." Richard Edgcumbe, in his *Talks with Trelawny,* asked him whether Byron boasted of his vices. "When with me, alone, never [that must be taken with a pinch of salt]. Our conversation was generally about Shelley. When others were present he tried to shock them, and tried to blacken his own character. But he had few vices and none of those he most vaunted." When a man is so reduced in self-respect as to spend all his time in fancy-dress, the crows have picked him clean and he has ceased to be himself altogether. It is one of the greatest triumphs of the human spirit ever recorded that Byron did in the end emerge from the horrible mutilations education and society had imposed upon his frail spirit—a real, a living man.

### BYRON AS HAMLET

One of the most revealing passages in the *Recollections* and disarmingly frank into the bargain, is as follows: "I was not then thirty, and the exigencies of my now full-blown vanities were unsated, and my credulity unexhausted. I believed in many things then, and believe in some now; I could not sympathise with Byron who believed in nothing." The two things that crop up about Byron in the *Recollections* over and above all other criticisms, are, first, his total unbelief in anybody and anything with the half-grudging exception of Shelley, and, next, his incorrigible irresolution. The one was the complement of the other, for a man without a background of faith whether in himself or others, or, except spasmodically, in any movement or ideas breasting the world's inertia, is necessarily nerveless in action. Compromise is his form of fatalism. In the talk of the

Pisan circle, it was Byron who never had any settled views upon any subject and followed a vagrom fancy, consistent only in its eighteenth and twentieth century dislike of enthusiasms and its spirit of disillusion. Trelawny insists almost to tedium upon Byron's vacillations and mental divisions, though without probing deeper into that dualism of spirit that had persecuted him all his life and paralysed not his native genius but his power of unifying it with his life. Byron, in his last Italian period, did become the living image not of Shakespeare's Hamlet, who was a resolute person, but of the lost distracted rudderless being of popular fancy, at odds with himself rather than with the court of Denmark.

How forsaken of himself is the picture of his daily life that appears in the *Recollections*. He was seldom out of bed before noon, when he drank a cup of very strong tea. At two, a biscuit and soda-water. At three, sauntering along the road—nearly always the same road—on horseback, "stopping at the same Podere, firing his pop-guns, and retracing his steps at the same slow pace." He dined at seven "as frugally as anchorites are said in story-books to have done," called on Count Gamba at nine, and then read or wrote verse until two or three in the morning when he went to bed, "feverish, restless, exhausted," to dream more than to sleep. A life so listless was a life devitalised, and yet his spirit was ever seething, revolving, straining and tormenting itself: "he exhausted himself," writes Trelawny, "in speculating, plotting, and planning; but when it came to the point of execution, the inertness of his body . . . held him fast, so that few men even amongst the poets did more in imagination and less in reality than he did."

Dilatory in habit, inconstant in mind, feckless in action, unjust and ungenerous in heart, was Trelawny's verdict upon Byron in the *Recollections*. He "has no decision of character," he writes elsewhere, "he has not made up his mind and cannot on any subject whatever." Nothing was certain with him, "and so he believes nothing. Shelley's earnest convictions he delights in opposing." That Byron was at sixes and sevens with himself at Pisa and Genoa confronts his most studious apologists, while his fleering scepticism is witnessed by one of his most observant friends, Lady Blessington, who, after meeting him at his Albaro villa near Genoa in April, 1823, wrote in confirmation of Trelawny that "his prominent defect is flippancy," and "this instability of opinion, or expression of opinion, of Byron, destroys all confidence in him."

The psychological key to these criticisms lies in the reactions and interactions between Byron and Trelawny. On the one hand, they illustrate to what extent Byron became a victim to his own passion for victimising Trelawny and assuming parts for the purpose of gulling, piquing and persecuting him. He tended more and more to become the stage-characters he paraded, while in his revulsion from the Trelawniesque, he came to distrust its qualities no less than its defects, and to scorn wholesale every belief and emotion associated with the romantic outlook upon life, deriding them in others and suppressing them in himself. It was this war upon himself which made him the irresolute being he appears so conspicuously in Trelawny's eyes. On the other hand, Trelawny himself, goaded by the sense of inferiority that Byron rivetted upon him, and seeking desperately to recover his poise, concentrates upon those elements in Byron in which he knew himself to be strong and his adversary to be weak. He came to Byron bristling with beliefs and enthusiasms; how empty of them was the iconoclast who snubbed and rebuffed him! How Hamlet-like was this spoilt darling of fame in contrast with his own hardy and resolute nature! It was the inevitable riposte to his tormentor, and, had it not been true, it would have been no satisfaction to his mutilated pride to make it.

### PORTHOS AND ARAMIS

The same explanation fits that curious dwelling upon the physical which is a mark of the *Recollections*. Why does Trelawny make so much of Byron's physical defects, why does he draw our attention again and again to his deformed foot, his preoccupation with which, he asserts, caused him to be morbid, savage and hypersensitive? Why does he write so copiously of the swimming, boxing and riding contests between them? Surely for the same reason that he underlines his invertebracy of character. The physical meant a great deal to one so robust of frame, so inured to adventure in remote climes,[1] and if Byron skinned his self-respect in the kingdom of thought, he could at least reimburse himself for the discomfort of his poverty in the field of physical achievement.

Byron, wrote his mental quarry, bragged of his prowess in riding, boxing, fencing, drinking, swimming and even walking. Trelawny's portrait of him is full of the sense of masquerade. "Come and dine, Tre, and we will carouse." "But pah," said Trelawny, "what was his 'carouse'? Half a glass of punch." Swilling bouts were characteristic of the Regency Englishman, "just as tuft-hunting is now," and so Byron, who was extremely abstemious in eating and drinking, talked Bacchus. His self-glorification, wrote his hunted hare, would never submit to the mortification of being outswum by Trelawny, and so he would make himself ill in swimming bouts with a man whose powers were so akin to Samson's that Byron need never have felt any shame in being worsted by him. If Byron did feel like that, it was because he despised the man who bettered him in them. Trelawny never dared to despise the man who cut his fine feathers to ribbons, but our worthy Porthos won a little of his own back in the kindlier sea. Must not the wretched Trelawny, stuck full of Byronic shafts, unconsciously have thought of Byron what Ludovico said to Iago, "more fell than hunger, anguish or the sea"?

---

[1] He inserts, for instance, an irrelevent passage into the *Recollections* about the slightness of Byron's travels, in comparison, he does not add, with the extent of his own.

One day, they swam out to the "Bolivar," the yacht built for Byron by Captain Roberts and commanded by Trelawny, and lying at anchor three miles out. Trelawny arrived long before Byron, and when they had rested, they started on the return journey. Byron was seized with retching and cramp, and Trelawny made to help him: " 'Keep off, you villain, don't touch me. I'll drown 'ere I give in.' I answered as Iago did to Rederigo, 'A fig for drowning! drown cats and blind puppies. I shall go on board and try the effects of a glass of grog to stay my stomach.' 'Come on,' he shouted, 'I am always better after vomiting.' " He got him back to the yacht and tried to induce him to return in the ship's boat. But he would not, "plumped in, and we swam to shore." Byron had to keep his bed for two days afterwards. Had he had less courage, he might have been less stubborn in his perversities against himself.

The *Recollections* devote pages to Byron's poor boxing and others to his efforts to keep himself thin. "He was the only human being I have ever met who had resolution enough to overcome his tendency to run to fat." He starved himself to that end like an eremite, existing for days in succession on biscuits and soda-water, "then, to allay the eternal hunger gnawing at his vitals, he would make up a horrid mess of cold potatoes, rice, fish or greens, deluged in vinegar, and gobble it up like a famished dog." Byron, indeed, felt so strongly upon the insult of grossness to the body of man, an insult to which our civilisation is singularly indifferent, that, says Trelawny, he made up his mind at least on that matter—to keep down to eleven stone or shoot himself.

Mr. Drinkwater says in explanation of Trelawny's attitude to Byron that Trelawny fancied himself as a man of action and that what he could not stomach was Byron's rivalry in this sphere. Byron was encroaching on the Pirate's prerogative. But there is no reason at all to doubt the latter's superiority in all bodily exercises. Surely it was the other way round. Was this coxcombical filibuster to excel him, Byron, in the field? But for Trelawny the matches with Byron were oil and bandages to his wound.

The remarkable thing, one feels, about the points of contact between the two men in Italy is not that Trelawny in the circumstances vilified Byron, but that he was on the whole so temperate in his judgments. That he did not penetrate to the potentialities of the deeper Byron is perfectly clear. Byron never gave him the slightest opportunity to do so. The radical disharmony of his then being, the outrages he committed upon his intrinsic self, as effectively hid those potentialities from himself. It is hardly surprising that if Byron chose to appear in one derogatory costume after another, Trelawny should have failed to recognise him in natural dress. That Byron trampled remorselessly upon Trelawny's susceptibilites and beliefs is not to be questioned, and that is what the latter's critics fail to take into account. That his victim was not immune, as perhaps Shelley, almost alone among men, would have been, from resentment and so from partiality, is equally indisputable. But if he could not see the true Byron, the Byron of Greece, his opinion of the false Byron of Italy is singularly little distorted by personal animus. What he felt, of course, appears unconsciously in what he wrote, but not in so hurricane a fashion as to blind his powers of observation, while flashes of the admiration he had so desired to feel crop up in such detached passages as, "I never doubted, for he was indifferent to life, and prouder than Lucifer, that if he had drawn his sword in Greece, he would have thrown away the scabbard." Take, for instance, his views upon Byron's marriage scandal, upon which he expressed himself freely. It is very noticeable how once he can get away from the miasma of his personal relationship with Byron, that poisoned them both, his impulse is to come forward as his apologist.

### THE BYRON SCANDAL

The attitude he took up both to the Augusta scandal and the abominable marriage with Miss Milbanke in 1815 is devoid of that sense of inferiority that plagued him in Byron's presence. Byron's incest with his half-sister, Augusta Leigh, lacks, even though he certainly loved her as a woman, any vital emotional interest: that resides in the conditions of his life that made it possible and the psychological reactions upon Lady Byron, consequent upon her knowledge of it. In spite of the van-load of literature devoted to this theme, it has yet to be thoroughly examined to what extent the Calvinistic influences of Byron's youth and the way his mother brought him up were responsible for his morbid craving for Augusta. It is possible, too, that self-defiance, a bravado as one of the moves in the war against himself, may have actuated him. All the evidence now made public by Miss Mayne's recent book confirms Byron's letter to Augusta, dated May 17th, 1819, quoted in Mr. Drinkwater's *The Pilgrim of Eternity* (p. 73), and is a perfectly conclusive admission, in spite of Mr. Drinkwater's complaint that Byron fails to mention the word incest. Medora Leigh was unquestionably the daughter of Byron and Augusta. What is to my muttons here is that Trelawny always stoutly maintained Byron's innocence, while, until the Lovelace papers were made available, his defence on the whole prevailed among the critics. Richard Garnett went so far as to declare that he had settled the whole controversy. This refusal to join the pack in full cry does credit to his heart if not his knowledge, and certainly vindicates him of that *naturally* malignant itch to injure Byron whereof he has been accused.

### UNHOLY MATRIMONY

He is equally to be numbered with the pro-Byronists in his contribution to the more significant problem of

Byron's marriage. The documents which Lady Lovelace placed at the disposal of Miss Mayne for her to build her remarkable biography upon them more than suggest that that marriage was partly a cloak for concealing his intrigue with Augusta, which in a perversity of pride allied to his perversity of sexual attraction he had a passion for half-confessing to, and in extraordinarily ill-chosen company. A respectable marriage would undo his indiscretions. It was a poor device, for there is now no doubt that Lady Byron got to know the truth before the separation and was suspicious of it, as she herself told Augusta, in the first week of the "treacle-moon." It was a still poorer device when the feather-headed Augusta, much to his chagrin, denied herself to him after his marriage. M. Maurois very unconvincingly conjectures that Byron thought himself in love with his Princess of Parallelograms." Can there be any doubt that the nearest emotion to love Byron ever reached with Annabella was curiosity, accentuated by the vague desire for revenging himself upon her for her first refusal of him? One reason for that shocking marriage was perhaps her "purity." Byron was obsessed with the sense of sin and dualistically set himself to be the most purpureate of sinners. Hence Lady Byron appeared to him in all her pathetically sententious solemnity as a "pure woman." He married her too as an experiment in sensation and a miserable misfire she turned out to be.

Whatever his reasons, and they are baffling enough, Byron's marriage seems to me the most odious act of his whole life, the act he committed publicly and with the sanctions of society, law and the Church. His Continental fame rested on his prestige as the poet of the passions. Such a poet took possession of a woman who loved him as a man might pick out a volume from the railway bookstall. The more striking, therefore, is Trelawny's fairness to Byron (especially as he believed he had married Annabella for money) in the subsequent battle between the parties.

God having blessed this matrimony, the united pair fell to lacerating each other, Byron torturing Annabella as a deliberate move in his internecine war on himself, Annabella torturing Byron by her disconcerting refusal to make the right responses in the game. Miss Mayne has set forth Byron's savage and sinister conduct to her, but it is dubious whether it could have gone to such lengths but for Lady Byron's own contribution to the campaign, expressed crudely and a little stupidly by Trelawny. Lady Byron, he wrote in the *Records:*

> with the pertinacity of a zealot, plied the poet with holy texts from Scripture, and moral maxims from pious writers. In his placid moments he submitted to the infliction; when her admonitions were out of season, and he was composing, or vexed with his own thoughts, he was not so passive. . . . His wife, perhaps, thought he was brooding mischief, and persistently interrupted him. He then would say things to shock and mortify her. She considered these self-accusations as his confessions, and took notes of them. Words spoken in the irritation of being interrupted were not allowed to sink into the ground, but registered, and produced in an evil hour as evidence to prove the poet was mad.

Of course, Byron behaved to Lady Byron with much grosser ill than this, but Trelawny's tone is hardly that of a man whose attitude to the former was viciously ill-natured. He says elsewhere:

> Anyone could live with him, excepting an inflexible and dogmatic saint; not that he objected to his wife's piety . . . but her inflicting it on him. The lady's theory was opposed

to this; her mission was to reform him by her example and teaching. . . . She was exacting, capricious, resentful, excessively jealous, suspicious and credulous. . . . She married him from vanity, and he married her to retrieve his broken fortune. They were brought together by the usual medium, lady matchmakers. There was no sympathy in choice or love, and so they parted.

This is too harsh to Lady Byron, who certainly married for love, and did her utmost in the wrong way to reconcile Byron with himself, as Miss Mayne puts it. He then goes on to quote the opinion of a lady he had known in Florence, intimate with the Byrons: "She (Lady Byron) was a formal pedantic prude, ill-looking, ill-dressed and ill-mannered." What surprised everybody, he adds, was that Byron "could have married such an iceberg." To Claire he wrote that Lady Byron was "a rabid fanatick," and in a talk with Richard Edgcumbe, that probably took place in 1875, he described the real rub of that unholy matrimony as "incompatibility of temper—his wife was a Puritanical woman and used to preach at him. Byron resented this by telling her all kinds of stories relative to his numerous loves. All humbug; but it was his weapon. She believed them all." It was not all humbug; some of those stories were true, but there is this to it, that Byron's morbid self-flagellation grew to be something like a mania, a monomania arising from the dissonance of introversion, a cleavage within the core of himself. He was perfectly mad at blackening his own character, Trelawny told Edgcumbe. "But he knew that others professed to be better than they were, so he determined to be worse than he was." Such an inversion, part arrogant, part honest and wholly destructive, was a characteristic Byronism.

The exacerbations of that marriage of opposites went deeper than Trelawny knew. Lady Byron's stilted gravity raised all his imps of mockery; her virtue maddened him, and his remorse drove him to worse injuries against her, the cause of it. She left him, because, as she herself told Hobhouse, they were at opposite poles in way and view of life. It was not Augusta which separated them; it was not even the madness she hoped rather than believed it was. It was because he made her life intolerable, and she made his a frensy. He humiliated her as he did Trelawny and Leigh Hunt and many another, and her outraged spiritual pride turned to that morbid dissection of Augusta which occupied her in her correspondence with Mrs. Villiers. In her cruel persecution of Augusta, pursued of course under the cloak of righteousness and concern for the sinner's salvation, she revenged herself upon the husband who had blighted her. The full story of the marriage and its psychological consequences is yet hidden in a Stygian twilight and even Miss Mayne's new installation of light cannot altogether resolve the mirk. The criminality of the marriage itself and its evil repercussions upon those concerned in it remain our only certain landmarks.

Thus, if we view the marriage itself as the source of all the evils that flowed from it, the dim psychological landscape takes on clearer outline. Byron was not the sinister diabolist of the Lady Byron apologists, nor Lady Byron the persecuting prude of Trelawny and the pro-Byronists. But each of them, by contracting a marriage without correspondence of tastes, harmony of temperament or sympathy of mind, without in fact any spiritual validity whatever, induced these specific reactions to a contact so unnatural. For that contraction and his brutal and indecent conduct after it Byron must bear the permanent odium. To maintain that his diabolism after the marriage was native to him is melodrama. Byron was no devil, but a spirit exceeding frail and utterly divided against itself which loved to flaunt the devil's properties, a spirit so ruined by an environment of which his own marriage was the worst example, that it came by a kind of morbid magnetism to cherish ruin as an end in itself. That Lady Byron was a nagging text-tyrant by nature is equally wide of the mark, and Byron was right in the only gleam of real sensibility he showed to absolve her of all specific blame. She was in a hopelessly false position and it was her conventional education and the victimisation of her marriage in relation to herself as well as Augusta which frosted her human, and nourished her fetichistic side. Thus, the party of Trelawny and the party of Lady Byron are both right and both wrong. Byron wholly and Lady Byron partly were what has been said of them, not by nature but by the pressure of one of the most iniquitous marriages in the history of an institution which has cared never a rush for the spiritual unity of the contracting parties and everything for forcing them to preserve an external unity without a fragment of inward justification.

## SHELLEY ON BYRON

An oblique light is shed on Trelawny as well as a more direct one on Byron, if we compare the attitude of others who knew him at the time with Trelawny's. Their views help to reveal what Byron really was like in 1822 and 1823, and so enable us the better to appreciate what Trelawny's revulsion from Byron must have been, no less than the latter's power of withering generous feeling. What of Shelley's determined recoil from Byron during the very period when Trelawny was in almost daily contact with the object of his fellow-poet's undisguised anger? Assuredly the gentlest and yet the most resolute of men had no axe to grind in condemning the sharer of his exile, who yielded to him the deference that he paid to no other man. Though Shelley was constantly jarred by Byron's worldliness, it was long before the barrier of delicacy and loyalty to his friendship was crumbled. The process of disintegration from warmth to estrangement was a slow one. He was utterly incapable of envying Byron's glittering fame, and he estimated his poetry with that rare discrimination and lofty magnanimity that distinguished all his judgments. He cared nothing for his reputation but a great deal for his poetic self-realisation. In Venice, he had met Byron's trull, La Fornarina, and seeing at a glance that there was not the faintest element of love between them or even that chemical attraction for which he forgave Hogg his attempted seduction of Harriet, he abandoned that tolerance in which he religiously believed and expressed his sense of outrage at the grossness of a purely physical amour. Did Shelley recognise it was Byron's Calvinism that made him hate women as the instruments of the Devil, distrust genuine passion in them and class them as squires do foxes? La Guiccioli, on the other hand, he called Byron's salvation, and, though no woman could have been that, she, his last love, was certainly the only one who, Augusta excepted, drew any real tenderness out of him.

When, therefore, Shelley did burst out against Byron —over the Allegra trouble (see Chapter III)—his vehemence and white-hot anger were Byron's own nemesis—and what a nemesis to lose Shelley's love!—for violating all titles to his sympathy. "I shall certainly take our house far from Lord Byron," he wrote to Claire just before the removal to the Bay of Spezia, "although it may be impossible to put an end to his detested intimacy." Byron, he said, "is the nucleus of all that is hateful and tiresome in it (society)." Such words are almost a paraphrase for what Trelawny himself wrote in the *Recollections,* and, whatever his strictures, he never went so far as Shelley when he pronounced the excommunication of "By God, he's no better than a Christian!" Yet even in this revulsion, the beauty of Shelley's nature is revealed in one sentence of his letter to Byron on the death of Allegra: "I will not describe her (Claire's) grief to you; you have already suffered too much."

Claire herself never forgave Byron and, fifty years later, Trelawny was taking her to task for nourishing a vindictive hatred against him. Granted that the women of the Pisa and Genoa circle were a lightless band who only caught the smoke from that classic fire in the hearts of a few men, still there must have been something pretty disfiguring about Byron in 1822–3 to have inspired the enmity of Mary, Claire and Marianne, not to mention the cool disparagements of Lady Blessington.

### LEIGH HUNT ON BYRON

But it is in comparing Leigh Hunt with Trelawny in their respective writings about Byron that the sanity and even moderation of the latter appear in a stronger light than the Byronists will readily admit. Hunt and his day nursery had come out to Pisa at the very point in time of Shelley's death, for it was after running over to Leghorn to welcome them on July 1st, 1822, that he and Williams were drowned on their way home. Admiral of the Fleet Trelawny's insatiable energy after that world tragedy overflowed into convoying the Hunt caravanserai by sea from Leghorn to Genoa whereto Byron followed them at the end of September. For three months at Pisa, Byron and the Hunts lived under the same roof,[1] and for ten months at Albaro, close to Genoa, Mary and the Hunts lived at the Casa Negroto, and Byron hard by at the Casa Saluzzo. Trelawny remained at Genoa until the December of that year, when his restlessness drove him inland. And it was of the Genoa period that Trelawny wrote: "the fine spirit that had animated and held us together was gone, and we degenerated apace."

The story of Hunt's association with Byron in Italy is one of the grubbiest pages of literary history. By the time this *Memoir* appears, my friend, Mr. Blunden, will have published his authoritative life of Leigh Hunt, and it is, therefore, with an Agag diffidence that by way of fairness to Trelawny I enter upon the former's relations with Byron. I do not know what view Mr. Blunden has taken of those relations, and if his view differs from my own, I am bound to defer to his greater knowledge and literary powers. But until I have read and been convinced by the exposition of a great poet and one of the leading biographers of our time, to whom incidentally I owe many acts of friendship and invaluable suggestions in the writing of this book, I cannot but set down what I think, hoping as I do so that our divergencies of opinion are only of degree.

---

[1] "At the Palazzo Lan-Franchi."

Unquestionably, Leigh Hunt had great provocation for his conduct in writing *Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries*. It was largely through Byron that he came to Italy; it was on his account, therefore, that he lost his profitable position as the editor of a Sunday newspaper and, in consequence of leaving England, quarrelled with his brother John. Byron also refused him the £50 to return to England, which he had virtually promised, just as he refused Mary Shelley an as-good-as-promised assistance after Shelley's death. We may assume too that Byron lost no chance of grilling those bantam airs and Cockneyisms which Hunt fell into when he found himself in a false position—and with that air of the *beau sabreur* which made him so admired by those who were not his victims. The incompatibility between the two men, the passionate and prickly democrat and the "noble Bard" aping the swashbuckling gentry of the Regency, loomed enormous—"there was not," wrote Trelawny in the *Records*, "a single subject on which Byron and Hunt could agree"—and Byron's reluctance in March, 1823, to honour his professions in the matter of the *Liberal* was hardly a lubricant to jangled nerves. In spite of the letters that Byron wrote to Moore a month earlier in answer to the letter begging him to "emerge out of the *Liberal*," "You forget how it would humiliate (Hunt). . . . Think a moment—he is perhaps the vainest man on earth. . . . If he were in other circumstances I might be tempted to take him down a peg; but not now—it would be cruel."—Byron's loss of heart in the enterprise to which he had committed himself was a sore rebuff to its ardent parent.

A gangrenous situation was the more envenomed from the differences between the two men over money. On the one hand, Hunt certainly had odd pecuniary views. He says so himself: "I have some peculiar notions on the subject of money" and, "I have not had that horror of being under obligation which is thought an essential refinement in money matters." On the other hand, Byron, as Trelawny has borne witness, had developed a miserly tendency towards the end of his life, while it cannot be denied that Hunt's unblushing solicitations for money might well have fatigued even a generous hand, which Byron's emphatically was not.

Not that he comes too badly out of it. As Miss Mayne has conscientiously figured out, he gave Hunt £300 over and above the £200 for which he held Shelley's bond. He paid for the furniture Shelley had bought for the Huntling tribe; gave Hunt £70 at Pisa, besides standing the expenses of the migration from Pisa to Genoa and in the summer of 1823 added another £30 for the further procession from Genoa to Florence. He abandoned his share of the profits in the *Liberal* (an easy generosity on his shrewd surmise of what they were likely to be) until Hunt Brothers were on their financial feet, presented them and the MSS. of his Pulci translation which he believed to be the "best translation that ever was or will be," together with *Heaven and Earth*, and handed over to John Hunt all but the copyrights of *The Age of Bronze, The Island* and nine cantos of *Don Juan*. He demanded no share of the profits of these publications and paid for John Hunt's defence when he was prosecuted for printing *The Vision of Judgment*, which, Miss

Mayne does *not* add, he could hardly refuse to do. Yet Hunt, is Miss Mayne's comment, raised an outcry because the £70 at Pisa was paid him by Byron's steward, instead of Byron in person. Throughout his relationship with Byron in Italy, it is evident that Hunt was suffering precisely as Trelawny was from a neurosis of inferiority and desperately asserting his democratic freedom against the overpowering person of the disgruntled milord. Yet it is to be noted how discord sprang up like dragons' teeth in Byron's wake as though the dislocation of his own soul summoned all the demons of mischief into his neighbourhood.

Another rattling bone of contention was the Hunt fauna. If Mary's life was, according to Mrs. Marshall in her *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley,* made intolerable by the noisy and naturalistic Hunt *ménage,* "still less attraction," she adds, had its "Cockney Bohemianism" for Byron. He wrote to her on October 6th, "They are dirtier and more mischievous than Yahoos. . . . Was there ever such a kraal out of the Hottentot country before?" They flowed into every corner of the house, poured down the banisters like lava, erupted among the Pilgrim's papers and must have caused him, with his well-known partiality for the human race, oft to ruminate upon the text, "Increase and Multiply." He instructed his bull-dog to keep the horde at bay. The aside he made to Trelawny, "I offered *you* those rooms. Why did you not take them?" seems a mild enough *cri de cœur* in the circumstances. Meanwhile Marianne was expecting her seventh and an eighth was at its heels.

It has often been maintained that he behaved very rudely to her. Williams wrote to Jane at Lerici from

Leghorn: "Lord B's reception of Mrs. Hunt was most shameful. She came into the house sick and exhausted, and he scarcely deigned to notice her; was silent and scarcely bowed." It may also have been dismay at her fidelity to the Scriptural injunction. And that spirited and prolific lady knew how to trump a Roland upon his Oliver. It is recorded in Hunt's *Autobiography* that Byron said to her one day, "What do you think, Mrs. Hunt? Trelawny has been speaking against my morals. What do you think of that?" "It is the first time," replied the darling of the clergy in her deeds if not her views, "I ever heard of them." This reduced the Mephisto who loved to parade fancy vices like medals on his chest to a sardonic silence. Marianne indeed, for all her professions of enlightenment, adopted the true blue "British Matron" [1] attitude to La Guiccioli, for which moral snobbery she got much less than she deserved, namely a lamb-like comment from Byron that she was "no great things."

Another story recorded by Hunt is that he once asked Byron, who had been speaking critically of some friends of his, if he (Byron) knew what Mrs. Hunt had said of his portrait (which had a fastidious and scornful mien) by Harlowe. It "resembled a great schoolboy who had had a plain bun given him, instead of a plum one." How telling is Trelawny's word that after Shelley's death, "we degenerated apace!"

From this clash between contempt, arrogance and exasperation on the one side and spiritual destitution,[2] wounded self-assertion, a writhing sense of impotence at a false position and an agonised fury of resentment on

[1] Miss Mayne.

[2] Shelley's death left Hunt quite literally marooned in Italy, and exiled from fellowship.

the other was born *Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries*. It is a phenomenon in English literature. Swift bore the burden of the wickedness of man in his head till it burst; Pope struck and twisted like a serpent on whom some insufferable pretender had set his heel; Shakespeare poured bile over the inconstancy of women in a terrible cold distorted rage. The furious zeal of Leigh Hunt's to skin Byron alive of every strip and shred of our common humanity, to degrade him into a creature of infinite shame, to load him with every littleness and lash him with every obloquy, is an eructation of feminine spleen that reads like a parody of its victim's "hell hath no fury. . . ." It is a truly frightening example of what erosion into the humanities malice is capable; it is astonishing that such ferocity could emanate from so amiable a man, and it is inexcusable that the subject of it should for more than a year have been the host of the writer. During that year Hunt had perforce to suffer Byron's disdain and lofty superiority in comparative silence. Byron died gloriously and the trodden one let fly at him. The result is a speaking witness of Blake's "better strangle an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires," and what fiendly shapes a repression can assume when at last it finds its inevitable vent.

Hunt overreaches himself again and again. He labels Byron as ill-natured, perverse, vain as Xerxes, entirely conventional, ignorant of the arts, opinionated, luxurious and effeminate, cunning, avaricious, madly jealous, mean-spirited, indolent, uncritical, pretentious, cynical, faithless, snobbish, exhibitionist, gluttonous, mock-heroical, splenetic, coarse, tactless, cruel and maladroit, hysterical, unforgiving, superstitious, trivial, materialist, old-womanish, ill-tempered over trifles, obtuse, an utterer of commonplaces as discoveries, a liar unless it were to his advantage to tell the truth, one who in the remotest solitudes kept his St. James's Street soul, fat and foxy in appearance, heavy and sophisticated in talk, vulgar, perpetually affected and insincere, dandiacal and ostentatious, cowardly[1] ("personal anxiety had no small hand in hastening his death in Greece"), impudent, envious, foul-minded and dishonest in all his professions ("Poor Lord Byron! He would have been a very unwilling apostle of liberty, had he known he was also to be a martyr.") This cockshy of a man is one so inherently uninteresting as to communicate his dullness to his executioner. The man who wrote of Byron's visits to him in prison, when he took books to him, "by flattering one's vanity (he was anxious to persuade us) of his own freedom from it" was putting out his own eyes with the red-hot poker destined for his enemy. And to sign this daub upon the plea that truth had compelled him to paint it was to elevate the barbarity of the Mosaic law on the wings of a frenzied self-deception.

The difference between Leigh Hunt's view of Byron in *Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries* and Trelawny's in the *Recollections* leaps to the eye. That of the one is wildly distorted, in spite of the natural kindliness of the writer; that of the other is blind only in the sense that it remained blankly unaware of Byron's truer nature, for which the possessor of it dug as deep a grave as his perversity would allow. Yet both

---

[1] "Cowardice," wrote Byron, "is, I believe, the only charge that has not yet been brought against me."

Hunt and Trelawny were equally the victims of that savage cynicism he had learned in the warfare against himself, a warfare that jaundiced the very skies over his head. The vitriol-throwing of Leigh Hunt helps us to understand not only the bitter provocation that maddened him, but what must have been Trelawny's sufferings when the ideal that he had nourished was presented to him as the grimacing mask of actuality. He never got over the shock, and that is certainly the reason why he missed Byron's great act of self-reconciliation in going to Greece. Disillusionment is often more credulous in unbelief than faith in its credos. Yet there can be no doubt which of the two men limped out of the arena of Byron's malice with the better credit.

### THE GREAT CHANGE

After Shelley's death, Byron, according to Trelawny, further deteriorated. He became more ceremonious, more calculating, more possessive. The niggardliness taught him by his mother gripped him tighter, though in fairness to Byron it must be recalled how he had to put every penny by for the Greek crusade. The death of the only man who redeemed for him the muck-heap of mankind had the effect of dehumanising him, making him more like Thersites than Timon and desiccating all natural sympathies, warmth of feeling and receptivity of mind. He became congealed, impervious, until one of the gods of Olympus—certainly not one of the goddesses—let a spring of running water into his heart. The miracle was wrought and the mischiefs of good family, good education and good society left him. Trelawny blundered after him: he could not see that the shivering wretch had at last put on the clothes of his true nature and was done with fancy dress for ever. The leopard had changed his spots.

## § II

### WITH BYRON IN GREECE

In his book, Trelawny quotes verbatim Byron's letter, written to him at Rome, where he was attending to Shelley's grave on June 15, 1823. At last Byron was the great man he was meant to be.

### THE "DEFORMED TRANSFORMED"

> You must have heard that I am going to Greece. Why do you not come to me? I want your aid and am exceedingly anxious to see you. Pray come, for I am at last determined to go to Greece; it is the only place I was ever contented in. I am serious, and did not write before, as I might have given you a journey for nothing; they all say I can be of use in Greece. I do not know how, nor do they; but at all events let us go.

There is more significance in this simple, unpretending letter than in the whole of the stucco romanticism that Byron, with his realist temper, fobbed off upon the herd of readers he despised. Its serenity of tone, air of purpose and unadorned confidence are a revolutionary departure from that tension of a severed and frustrated mentality that wasted his life in Italy, alienated Shelley, disillusioned Trelawny, poisoned Claire and sent Leigh Hunt half-daft with passion for vengeance.

It marks the most radical change in his spiritual history that had ever come to him, and by it he ended that insensate game of chess with himself wherein he countered every move of his inherent both with his worldly and his doctrinal self. It made a new man of him because it closed that dualistic conflict that was tearing him to pieces and restored him to himself in a lasting peace. It subjugated the realist with all his pomps of a decadent sensationalism and substituted for him the romantic (whether he liked it or not) with a clear harmonious vision of the external disposition of things in which he was engaged. In making peace with himself he became the master of life even in his death. Out of distractions grew certainty and poise; out of chaos unity.

Not without just cause are we sceptical nowadays of theological terms like "rebirth" and "resurrection," while the fatalisms of psycho-analysis, if they redeem us from the sense of sin, discourage us in the hopes of mutation from our dingy self-protections against circumstance. But when Byron passed from Italy to Greece, his spirit was reborn, and no more penurious expression can embrace the full meaning of what had happened to him. He did not, of course, create anything new, for the latent force must have been in him to have achieved the change. It came, therefore, from his deeper, more instinctive self. Yet was it so great in itself as to justify the term "rebirth," one usually reserved for meaningless ceremonial. He became, to quote one of his own titles, the Deformed Transformed.

Thus, the story of Byron's last pilgrimage into Greece is more than the story of Byron and Greece. It remains for all time as a personal drama of the incalculable possibilities of the human spirit the moment that it can resolve the discordant elements imposed upon it by the complexities of the social mechanism, and in so doing become true to itself. Is it surprising that Trelawny, unable to see through the caricature that Byron dangled before his nose and confronted by this cohesion of warring constituents into a work of art, failed to appreciate the magnitude of the change? "The idea," wrote Lady Blessington at the other end of the scale, "the idea of the greatest poet of his day sacrificing his fortune, his occupation, his enjoyments,—in short, offering upon the altar of liberty all the immense advantages which station, fortune, and genius can bestow!" The idea!

Byron, as is well known, hesitated many months before he finally made up his mind. Trelawny wrote to Hobhouse from Greece in April, 1824, soon after Byron's death:

> It was long my great object to get him out of Italy, and he was wearied of staying there. Exercise and excitement seemed necessary for both his body and mind, and both seemed to be declining in his long, inactive and secluded way of living in the south. He became peevish, sickly and indifferent, and discontented with everything. He acknowledged this, and I continually urged him with new plans, I built him a yacht [he means, of course, captained it], for he was always fond of the sea. He got wearied of that. He would then go to South America, and took some ship for that purpose. Then he turned to North America, and from repeated and pressing invitations from them seemed determined to go there. He got everything prepared, though this was much against my wishes, as I believed it was the country least suited to him. After much delay, the Greeks gaining ground, and his strong partiality to Greece—the interest everyone seems to feel for its fate—and lastly the letters of his friends in England decided him to go there. You know what followed.

How infuriating to Byron must this dry-nursing have been! But his partiality for Greece and the persuasions of his friends and of the fatuous Greek Committee of which he and Hobhouse were members were not the directing motive of his exit from futility. The great personal opportunity the Greek cause afforded him, the providential means it gave him for rehabilitating his reputation from the decline his Venetian misadventures had completed, and of escaping from all his embarrassments at Albaro with the (to him) maddening Hunt family—these were minor reasons for a major devotion. Still less tenable are the further reasons supplied by Trelawny. He wanted to rid himself of La Guiccioli, and "this morbid feeling [about his deformity] ultimately goaded him on to his last Quixotic crusade in Greece." There is no evidence at all for this first shot in the dark. As Mr. Drinkwater truly says, "greatly to her credit, she finally wished to accompany him to Greece; equally to Byron's, he refused to let her go." The second reason reflects the truth that it was Trelawny rather than Byron who was pre-occupied with the deformity. I have already discussed why that was so.

It is ironical that the romantic who found Byron not romantic enough, the man of action who detested his inertia and inconstancy of mind, his companion-in-arms upon that forlorn crusade who actually had some influence upon his decision, should have failed to grasp the true measure of this leagues-long stride from the realist of the Regency pose [1] to the romantic of his own poems, shorn of their fopperies.. Why did the irresolute put on resolution?

There is no answer. Our knowledge is in the effect not the cause and that by that resolution he found his release. In this age, when the impulses of the subconscious are sometimes assumed to be like those fishes with teeth like gleaming stalactites in their cavernous jaws, ravening in the lightless abysses, we are apt to miss these simpler interpretations. If one may use an old-fashioned term, Byron's decision to go to Greece was his redemption, and he knew it. The old logomachy between himself and Shelley at Venice and by the Lake of Geneva—Byron declaring for the helplessness of man against the forces of external evil, Shelley replying that the Kingdom of Heaven or Hell was within us—was settled at last. By his decision the Calvinist who believed in a savage Jehovah yielded to the romantic who believed in man. What were the dubious self-communings, the anguished collision of forces within him, nor how came it that his inward psyche asserted its mastery and put the usurpers from their seat, no record exists to disclose to us. What we know is that it happened. What we perceive is that he consulted his own insulted daemon and that the reply was in perfect unison with his own nature—else Byron could never have acted as he did in Greece itself. What we feel is that though the letter kills and that vast mechanism which is its being rules from London to Tokio and New York, yet the spirit may still have the last word. "Only that day dawns to which we are awake," is Mr. Tomlinson's epilogue to his *All Our Yesterdays*. Surely Byron's awakening hangs the heavens with a new Morning Star by whose gaze to refresh our weariness.

---

[1] Mr. Nicolson rightly believes he put this on for Trelawny's benefit. But I think he also put it on to spite himself.

From all those graceless affectations and coxcombries; from that false sentiment which made him write, "Fare thee well and if for ever" on the back of a butcher's bill; from the muddles of a life distraught and the defiances and perversities of a temperament expressing a thirty years' war on itself; from the corruptions of wealth and that mannerism of the supercilious noble from which, in spite of recognising its staginess, he had never been able to shake himself free; from that fatal instability and incoherence which made Trelawny write of him—"He exhausted himself in planning, projecting, beginning, wishing, intending, postponing, regretting and doing nothing—the unready are fertile in excuses, and his were inexhaustible;" from the psychological welter which made him the ineffectual devil in contrast with the "ineffectual angel" whose will was so indomitable—Byron delivered himself at one stroke. At peace with himself like Shelley, he cut the painter and was off.

He had no false ideals about the Greeks. He knew that in spite of their merrymakingness they were greedy, intriguing and factious, but in taking that noble resolution to save Greece, he took the only infallible step of saving himself. From that moment, Shelley's realities ceased to be his illusions. He became a romantic in the sense that the Tomlinson of our own age is one—making a continuous way between irony and vision, and proceeding along it without being darkened by the one or dazzled by the other. Not that Byron altogether ceased to be a realist. But the realist was now recruited as the servant of the romantic. As a pure realist, Byron was like the popular image of the visionary—indeterminate, feckless and incapable. As a romantic he became the most practical man on the soil of Greece. In spite, therefore, of all the literary manure that from his day to ours has kept his name so lividly green, Byron remains in the last count a great man, and so much the greater because there was much rubbish to toss over the sides of the "Hercules." "He never did himself justice," was Lady Blessington's epigram upon him.

A saying of wisdom up to August, 1823, and of a *mondaine* after it.

There is one other quotation from Lady Blessington I must notice, because it illumines one of the changed facets in Byron's spirit—his attitude to Trelawny himself. Just after Byron had sent his letter of invitation to Trelawny in Rome, Lady Blessington wrote in her *Idler*: "He (Byron) said that since the death of Shelley, he had become greatly attached to Mr. Trelawny; who, on that melancholy occasion, had evinced such devotion to the dead and such kindness to the living, as could only spring from a fine nature, and which had acquired him the regard of all who witnessed it." [1] There is no further evidence that Byron, when the two men met again, ever roasted Trelawny again. But it was too late; the damage was done and poor Trelawny could not be uncooked. When Byron's east wind blew out (to change the metaphor from hot to cold) Trelawny merely lost his fear of his mind, and that was the primary cause why he left him in Greece. Meet them on board ship, as the Americans say.

### THE VOYAGE OF THE "HERCULES"

I have tried to show why Trelawny wrote about Byron in Italy as he did, and to put forward an explanation for the psychological effects of the intercourse between them. Does that explanation cover Trelawny's conduct to Byron on the voyage to Greece, his separation from him in the Ionian Islands, and his extraordinary behaviour in relation to him after Byron's death? I think that it does, and, what is more, that Trelawny's conduct is unintelligible without such an explanation. The critics have quite rightly united in condemning him for these actions, but none have paused to ask why he committed them, being content, I presume, with original sin.

---

[1] It was an odd symptom of the changed and more childlike Byron that he designed two amazing Homeric helmets for himself and Trelawny, his own with his crest, *Crede Biron*, beneath the nodding plume. But Trelawny would have none of it.

In the first place, why did Trelawny urge Byron to go to Greece? Was it not because his subconscious self put it to him that if the pair of them went to Greece together, he would be rid of that torturing sense of inferiority to Byron which had mangled him at Pisa and Genoa? He had a little readjusted himself by his physical contests with him; in Greece he could assert himself as a man of action over Byron's ineptitude in that field. I will show him, one can almost hear him saying, that I am something more than a music-hall turn. In the fight for liberty I shall be on my own ground; the tables will be turned, for what will he be able to do without me? Does that not perhaps explain the tone of taking Byron under his wing expressed in the letter he wrote to Hobhouse?

Naturally, then, he warmed to Byron's decision to go, both for the sake of the cause and his own self-respect. The compatibility and cordiality of their fellowship on board the "Hercules" demonstrate that it was so. Temporarily, the division between them was closed, but only thus, since Trelawny was bound in the circumstance to miss detecting the immense psychological importance of Byron's settlement of a life enmeshed. In Trelawny's description of the voyage occurs this significant passage: "I never was on shipboard with a better companion than Byron. He was generally cheerful, gave no trouble, assumed no authority, uttered no complaints, and did not interfere with the working of the ship; when appealed to, he always answered, 'Do as you like.' In other words he yielded the leadership, and on shipboard, Trelawny, tremendous bluffer as he was about his seamanship, was in his own element. No longer ravaged by Byron's taunts and jeers, *gauche* from his mockeries, confused as a bewildered child by his impersonations, he could be free, he could enjoy the force of Byron's mind without wincing from its steel.

Byron, always superstitious as a savage, put to sea on Friday, July 13—he was through with the witches. It was an uncomfortable voyage. The Argonauts with their horses, arms and ammunition—(Trelawny, Count Gamba, Byron, the hysterical young doctor Bruno, Scott the bluff captain whom Byron cured of drink, Fletcher who with Lady Blessington thought his master out of his mind for throwing himself away on a country of savages, seven servants, among them Trelawny's negro and Byron's Venetian gondolier, Tita, and, from Leghorn onwards, two Greeks and Hamilton Browne)—messed and mostly slept on deck. Before the brig had wallowed out its five days to Leghorn, heavy weather drove her back to port. At first, Byron was "unusually silent and serious," perplexed in his mind with the mountainy difficulties of his quest. Hot and cold fits alternated, as one would expect of a man who had taken the great decision of his life, had his bleak moments of regret and reaction, and had no idea what he was in for. His sombre meditations were broken by eruptions of boisterous buffooneries or sardonic invective. When the voyagers came in sight of the island of Lanza, which the Neapolitan Government had converted into a dungeon, Trelawny said to him, "There is a sight that would curdle the milky blood of a poet-laureate." "If Southey were here," he answered, "he would sing Hosannas to the Bourbons. Here kings and governors are only the jailors and hangmen of the detestable Austrian barbarians. What dolts and drivellers the people are to submit to such universal despotism. I should like to see, from this our ark, the world submerged, and all the rascals in it drowning like rats."

But when "the collier-built tub built on the lines of a baby's cradle," which "would do anything but go ahead," was fairly on her way, his dark broodings all evaporated, and from that time forward he never looked back. The reluctant nature that follows grudgingly upon the motions of the spirit, had caught up. They told ghost stories together, had pistol practice and swimming contests, twitted the captain and played practical jokes. When the cradle passed the rugged coast of Calabria, rocking in the vortices and conflicting currents, "he improved amazingly in health and spirits, and said, 'I am better now than I have been for years.' " What else could he have been? Byron had become in himself what Trelawny reports his *Memoirs* to have been before the tricksy hand of Moore fingered them, "vigorous, fearless and truthful."

Much of his time was spent in reading, and watching the classic shores—Elba, Socracte, the Straits of Messina and Etna—that hove in sight. He was delighted with Stromboli and told Trelawny he would see the scene in a fifth canto of *Childe Harold*. Goethe's complimentary poem which had reached him at Leghorn had heartened him for an enterprise that might well have filled the stoutest faith with searchings. But with a cloistered literature and all the second-hand academics of life he was hardly on speaking terms. It was in the mood of burning all paper boats that he testily upped and said to Trelawny, when on an excursion to Ithaca it was proposed to dabble in a little Homeric archaeology: "Do I look like one of those emasculated fogies? Let's have a swim. I detest antiquarian twaddle. Do people think I have no lucid intervals, that I came to Greece to scribble more nonsense? I will show them I can do something better: I wish I had never written a line, to have it cast in my teeth at every turn." In a spasm of irritation, he treated the ceremonious welcome of the monks at Vathi on Ithaca with disdain, but next day filled their alms-box, and declared on his way back, "If this isle were mine, I would break my staff and bury my book." Nevertheless, the voyage as a whole entirely confirms the revolutionary *volte-face* of Byron's life, and Gamba in his *Narrative of Lord Byron's Last Journey in Greece* (1825) testifies how his cheerfulness infected all the company. They sighted the Morea on August 2nd, and Byron said, "I feel as if the eleven long years of bitterness I have passed through since I was here were taken from my shoulders." He never spoke a truer word.

### TRELAWNY LEAVES BYRON

On the day following they anchored at Argostoli, the port of Cephalonia, where they expected to come in touch with Colonel Napier. He was a shrewd and prompt student of affairs, and the only official known to be sympathetically affected to the Greek cause. Byron remained a month on board the "Hercules," before he took up his quarters with Gamba at Metaxata, some five miles from the capital. It was not until the

January of the following year that he arrived at Missolonghi. Trelawny, longing to display himself in his true colours, to impress his fellow-voyager who had no talent for action and to hurl himself into the press of events, consumed with impatience at what he wrongly assumed to be a recrudescence of Byron's familiar dilatoriness and hesitations, went off with Browne, carrying dispatches from Byron, to the Peloponnese, whither we shall follow his confused adventures in a later chapter. He was to see him but once more, and then in his winding-sheet.

An action of ill and highhanded judgment has sometimes been called by a harder name. Was then Trelawny Byron's lieutenant? [1] The difference between them was over a political issue which Trelawny decided both by temperament and by his anxiety to prove himself different from that shrunken self at the Palazzo Lanfranchi, Byron by insight and sagacity. The one plunged into party, the other put himself above it. Trelawny attached himself to the Odysseus party because it was the one most congenial to his point of view, and most likely in that view to further the cause each had at heart. He joined it because he believed it was the only one which could get anything done, though his main reason must have been that he was agin the Government on principle. His reason for leaving Byron is best given in his own words. "I well knew," he wrote, "that once on shore Byron would fall back upon his old routine of dawdling habits, plotting, planning, shilly-shallying and doing nothing." "I separated from Byron at Cephalonia," he wrote to Jane Williams in the September of 1823. "He was past hope. He trifled four months at that miserable island. Could I longer waste my life in union with such imbecility?" He did not part from Byron in anger, for he sent a note to Metaxata, "we missed you sadly last night at grog time."

---

[1] Trelawny was furious with a certain Count Palma for spreading a tale that he was in Byron's pay on the Grecian expedition.

It was a misjudgment which saw Byron on Grecian soil in his Italian costume, and for anybody who had rubbed shoulders with him when his every day was twilit with dubiety—one to cause no raising of the brow. One wonders whether any of us would have thought any different. The past living on in the present is one of those easy biological generalisations that make for a drowsy eyesight. Trelawny himself certainly did not perceive any psychological break in the continuity between the past and the present. The passages quoted above betray a genuine contempt for Byron. When he laid aside his perpetual sarcasms and make-believe, his ferocious baitings and passion to expose the follies of others, Trelawny was no longer restrained by his fear and respect for Byron's mind.

## BYRON ON THE THRESHOLD

The part that Byron acted in Greece has been brilliantly analysed and compacted by Mr. Harold Nicolson, who with wise touch, imaginative insight and vivid power of recreation, has told a rare tale of the impact of native genius and inwardly fed far-sightedness upon a madding chaos. The long aside he has devoted to Trelawny is too hasty and casual not to need much correction. As Miss Mayne, M. Maurois and Mr. Drinkwater have all left supplementary modern accounts of Byron in Greece, there is little enough for me to do except to illustrate Byron's psychological awakening in a summary of the events which threw it into relief. The dreary welter of those events is irradiated by that mysterious passage of a human life from the nescient to the positive, and from dualism to unity. And the story is the more illuminating when it is seen how that same whirlpool made a cockleshell of Trelawny's career.

Certainly Byron acted in Greece with the firmness, judgment and capacity for affairs of the ideal romantic, and without a trace of that exhibitionism which had plagued his former life. If he lingered at Metaxata, it was because he had very difficult problems to solve among all the feuds, intrigues, discords and distractions that surrounded him. Blaquière, who was entrusted with the English Loan of £400,000, had gone off to England, while of the two Greek leaders to whom Byron had been recommended, one (Bozzaris) was dead, and the other (Mavrocordato) was a fugitive.[1] He had to winnow the news-mass that streamed through to him; discriminate between conflicting suggestions and reports, and interview dissentients. "He occupied himself," as Gamba says, "in discovering the truth hidden as it was under these intrigues." Even the 40 Suliotes he enrolled "agreed only in continually putting in fresh claims." With all this delicate business at his hand, physically interrupted by intermittent seizures, he found time to relieve local distress among the refugees. It was certainly not at his own desire that he stayed where he was.

He was perfectly right in the circumstances to say, "I won't budge a foot further until I see my way." He refused to budge because his moral authority in Greece rested upon his avoidance of all suspicion of partisanship. *The Westminster Review* gives an account of his "Residence in Greece," appended as a supplement to Medwin's foolish book, *Conversations of Lord Byron noted during a Residence with his Lordship at Pisa in the Years* 1821 *and* 1822. This paper criticises Byron for paying too much attention to the dissensions between the military chiefs. But he was right as rain in declaring: "I have a difficult part to play; however I will have nothing to do with the factions, unless to reconcile them, if possible." "Make up your differences," he replied to all the clamourers, "I have come to help none of you as a partisan, but all of you as a common friend." The autumn and part of the winter he spent at Metaxata was in pursuance of a fixed inward purpose to weld the discordant parts into a whole. Justly has Mr. Nicolson written of "his cool political instinct which contrasts so curiously with the plush and tawdriness of his more superficial manifestations and which stands out so clearly from the vapid and woolly-headed comments of his contemporaries." He had finally left the tenebrous country of his self-styled Italian exile behind him.

---

[1] See Prothero's edition of Byron's *Letters.*

Did he know that he was to die? At Missolonghi, Mr. Nicolson says, he accomplished nothing but his own suicide, but this act of heroism secured the ultimate liberation of Greece. On the eve of his departure for Greece, he told Lady Blessington, "I have a sort of boding that we see each other for the last time; something tells me I shall never return from Greece." [1] Your "man of affairs" has no "within" to guide him through perplexities and problems—he relies on an external rule-of-thumb. But your man of imagination moves from a central driving-force into which he can withdraw to replenish his being, and if he still fails to mould events according to that purpose, he can always die, as Byron did, perhaps not unwillingly, though not so willingly as Shelley.

---

[1] Again: "You will think me more superstitious than ever, when I tell you that I have a presentiment that I shall die in Greece." See Nicolson, p. 92.

### MISSOLONGHI

"If Greece should fall," he told Gamba, "I will bury myself in its ruins," and it was in that spirit that on December 28th he sailed from Cephalonia, and after escaping capture by the Turks by the skin of his teeth, arrived safely among the swamps and mud-flats of Missolonghi. Colonel Stanhope with a corps of European officers and Mavrocordato at the head of the Greek staff gave him a welcome of pomp, while the citizens greeted him as their saviour.[1] Like most saviours, he was at once plunged into a thorn-hedge of cares, crosses, obstacles and conflicting claims and interests. Deputations surged at his doors, and within them the naïve Benthamite, Colonel Stanhope, with his printing press was soon at loggerheads with his policy. "It is odd enough," said Byron, "that Stanhope, the soldier, is all for writing down the Turks; and I, the writer, am all for fighting them down." Yet Byron was very patient with the doctrinaire. The brigade of 500 Suliotes that he formed mutinied, while both the army and navy threatened wholesale desertion for arrears of pay. Stanhope left him in February to join the party of Eastern

---

[1] Byron arrived in high fettle. Gamba wrote: "I could scarcely refrain from tears; whether moved by the noise and signs of joy and delight, I know not; or whether from gladness that we now met each other safe on the Grecian soil, after encountering, in the space of a few days, so many dangers."

Greece, and the differences between Eastern and Western Greece promised open warfare. The Turkish fleet blockaded the town. All day and every day it rained and rained again and went on raining until a shorter name for Missolonghi was mud. Squalor, human and material, festered on every side, and brawls among the mixed Levantine population vied with official crises for frequency. From mid-February to April 19th, when he died, all the fiends of mischief beset him, as though born like Beowulf's Grendel out of the pestilential swamps of the place. Six out of his eight English mechanics left the place in disgust. The miasmas sapped his vital forces; vexations dogged him daily; hungry self-seekers besieged him for money; delays and frustrations mired him ever deeper; plots crouched round every corner. He had no real stalwarts at his elbow, except the besotted Parry, and his doctors, Bruno and Millingen, did their damnedest to kill him.

In the middle of February he was seized with a fit, and his friends implored him to leave his unhealthy surroundings. He refused to listen either to them or his own despairing heart, and the poet of the midnight oil went steadfastly on, handling every variety of financial, administrative, diplomatic and military problem as though he were a Government and Civil Service in one. He organised an artillery brigade. He planned expeditions and went on with the preparations for the spring campaign of Lepanto. He did his utmost to mitigate the ferocities of war, released Turkish prisoners, rescued the crew of a Turkish vessel and continued his negotiations for reconciling the factions. The only serious mistake he made, as Mr. Nicolson points out, was the faith he put in the turbulent Suliote grab-alls. He would certainly have gone to Salona to meet Odysseus, Trelawny, Stanhope and the chiefs of Eastern Greece, had not the reverses of Western Greece depreciated his political bargaining power, so that death by a straighter road crowned him liberator. Through all the dissensions, he preserved his faith in the Greeks without indulging illusions about them, and in the urgency of hourly issues maintained unobscured his single purpose of liberating an oppressed people. "I am come here," he said, "not in search of adventures, but to assist the regeneration of a nation whose very debasement makes it more honourable to become their friend." His courage if not his spirits were unflagging against the personal assaults of illness and the external ones of his most arduous situation. Dressing his followers with bravery, he himself lived as frugally as a labourer. He met every misbegotten circumstance with fortitude, exercising patience, good humour and sagacity through all his trials, dauntless in spirit, a Galahad in bearing. He was chivalrous to Don Quixotism, wrote Stanhope of him, and "natural and simple as a child." Byron!

Nicol in the *English Men of Letters, Byron,* writes,

> Nothing can be more statesmanlike than some of Byron's papers of this and the immediately preceding period; nothing more admirable than the spirit which animates them. . . . From first to last he was engaged in denouncing dissension, in advocating unity, in doing everything that man could do to concentrate and utilize the disorderly elements with which he had to work.

Had Byron been a man of frigid temper and seasoned political experience, his actions in Greece would still have been a very remarkable demonstration of his powers of leadership. But we know that he was nothing of the kind. "The mind of Byron," wrote Stanhope to Bowring, the Secretary to the Greek Committee, "is like a volcano; it is full of fire, wealth and combustibles." He could not eradicate his passions: why on earth should he have done? What he did was to unify them and every warring impulse, and harness them for his single goal. The dilettante of the Palazzo Lanfranchi and the *cavaliere servente* of Venice and Ravenna found himself in a fair way to handling the fortunes of a whole people. True, he failed as Athene herself would have failed for all her wisdom—and then by his death retrieved all. Whether or no he refused the crown of Greece is not certainly known, but it is indubitable that he deserved it and that the man for whom fame had been what beauty was to Keats became indifferent to its spices, and never wasted a thought upon an outside world now ignorant of his deeds. Indeed, Mr. Nicolson is right to point out that he positively suffered from excessive diffidence in Greece. There is not in literary history a more kindling poem than the resurrection of Byron in the cause for which he died. "Well, there is my life to her," he said the day before he gave it. But when his life in Greece, "with inward glory crowned," is compared with what it was in Italy, whereof it was the triumphant reversal, it is lit by an effulgence that transcends mortality, and flashes upon this world of compromise and make-believe the wings of Psyche.

I make no apology for quoting some of the birthday stanzas he wrote nearly a month after his arrival at Missolonghi, for after all they express his own transformation, while their quality is worlds removed from the bait he was wont to toss out for the groundlings:

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move:
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker and the grief
Are mine alone!

But 'tis not *thus*—and 'tis not *here*—
Such thoughts should shake my soul, nor *now*,
Where glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow.

. . . . .

Awake! (not Greece—she *is* awake!)
Awake, my spirit! Think through *whom*
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home!

. . . . .

If thou regrett'st thy youth, *why live?*
The land of honourable death
Is here:—up to the field and give
Away thy breath!

Seek out—less often sought than found—
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest.

On April 9th, he was caught in a storm, insisted on returning by boat instead of on horseback, and arrived chilled and soaked at his squalid den. He fell ill but insisted on going out the next morning. For a few days he staved the fever off, but on the 15th was forced to take to his bed. His wretched doctors, ignorant of what his illness was, bled him in spite of his resistance and made him worse, and later administered to him a horrid potion of valerian infused with ether. For twenty-four hours he was dying of suffocation until, on the evening of the 19th, he was finally released. A mighty thunderstorm was his requiem. Stanhope wrote from Salona on April 30th: "He sacrificed his comfort, fortune, health and life to the cause of an oppressed nation. Honoured be his memory! Had I the disposal of his ashes, I would place them in the Temple of Theseus or in the Parthenon of Athens." Stanhope was right. Greece owed her freedom to Byron, for Byron's death moved the public opinion of England; public opinion moved Canning; the traditional Turkophil policy of England was changed and Navarino removed the Turkish heel from Greece.

### TRELAWNY IN GREECE

The narrative of Trelawny's Byronic extravaganza in Greece belongs to another chapter. William Rossetti in his *Talks with Trelawny*[1] describes Byron's last words to him in Greece as follows: "Now, Trelawny, it depends on what you do whether I put you into the next canto of *Childe Harold* or into the next of *Don Juan*." There can be no doubt into which abode of the Muse he elected to rush. Byron, before his romantic espousal of the Greek cause, was, as I have suggested, a pure realist. Trelawny writes of him in Italy realistically and yet from the romantic point of view, whereas in Greece he shot upon the stage of traditional Byronism.

No doubt about it that the clear-sightedness stamped upon the first part of the *Recollections* deserted Trelawny in Greece. Was not his anxiety to prove to *him-*

---

[1] *Athenæum*, July to August, 1882.

*self* that he was a better man than Byron thought him partly responsible for his headlong career there? He hurried too much over his self-vindication. He seems to have reverted in Greece to the atmosphere of *The Adventures of a Younger Son,* and to have seen in the Chieftain of Eastern Greece, who could never have secured either the unification of the Greeks or the expulsion of the Turk, a reanimation of his beloved de Ruyter. It was not long after his wild exploits in Greece that he began in Florence and in the spirit of emotions recollected in tranquillity to record those even wilder desperaderies in the Indonesian seas. In the Trelawny prose sagas, de Ruyter and Odysseus might change places without our being a penny the wiser.

The freebooting of his campaigns with Odysseus in the mountains of Attica, the guerilla warfare, the sallies and surprises, the forays and repulses, the desperate hazards, the camp life and the individualistic leadership, all recalled the brave old battailous days when Odysseus-de Ruyter commanded the privateering brig with its motley crew, and the Turkish squadron winding through the defiles was transformed into a portly East Indiaman wallowing in the trough of seas which the pursuing ship rode so lightly. The knight-errant of Malays, expropriated and despoiled by the respectable piracies of the East India Company, must so often have got confused with the champion of bands of roving and predaceous Hellenes all struggling with each other but sometimes with the Turk to remove his foot from the neck of a captive nation. It was appropriate that Trelawny named his daughter by his Greek wife, Tersitza, the sister of Odysseus, Zella, after that Arabian Zela, so ardently loved that he wrote of burning her dead body in memory of his last offices to his worshipful Shelley. Or did he burn Shelley's as a gesture of memorial devotion to his lost gazelle? Who can tell which way it was?

In *The Adventures of a Younger Son,* Trelawny was a Byronist in real life, long before he had so much as heard of Byron and been so disappointed at the unheroic postures of the man of fashion when he met him. In Greece, he relapsed into theatrical Byronism when Byron himself had broken with it. He was beating about the bush, desperately hunting for his lost self-confidence, the man of action at all costs. He became the *giovane stravagante* of Mary Shelley's patronising description—as though Byron was still looking on and mocking him. The open-eyed romantic who had clearly distinguished between the resolute Shelley and the havering Byron, between the man who lived faithful to his visions and the man who had none, between the solitary scholar-poet and the pet and scandal of society —became the romanticist of popular imagination. The apostle of Shelley became the camp-follower of Odysseus. When Byron, the railer, the scoffer, the embittered disbeliever, with his will and power of action paralysed, became what Trelawny had so confidently expected him to be, Trelawny himself, Byronised by the giddy atmospherics of the Grecian theatre of war, projected forward at express speed in his eagerness to show himself what he could do and desolated by the loss of Shelley, lost touch with him. That voyage in the "Hercules," when they were closer together than in all the days of their Italian propinquity, was the nearest they ever got to a true exchange of sympathies.

## TRELAWNY AND BYRON'S DEATH

Trelawny's attitude to Byron after his death is the hardest nut for his biographer to crack. It reveals such alternations of feeling within a short period that without the psychological clues to them they would remain inexplicable, and the acutest historian could not make them wholly intelligible.

When he heard of Byron's death, he hurried to Missolonghi and arrived at "the belt of death" on the 24th or 25th of April. Fletcher removed the pall "and there lay the embalmed body of the Pilgrim—more beautiful in death than in life." Every line that his vexed life had traced upon it was erased, and "few marble busts could have matched its stainless white, the harmony of its proportions, and perfect finish; yet he had been dissatisfied with that body, and longed to cast its slough." He asked Fletcher to bring him a glass of water, and, when he was out of the room, "to confirm or remove my doubts as to the cause of his lameness, I uncovered the Pilgrim's feet, and was answered—the great mystery was solved."

A crowd of commentators—the historian Finlay, Mr. Edgcumbe, Prothero, Richard Garnett, Frances Power Cobbe, Mr. Nicolson and others—have let themselves go upon this incident, mostly in reprobation of it. Trelawny's avid curiosity had convinced him—with some little measure of truth—that Byron's perversities were partly caused by a morbid dwelling upon this accident of birth, and he wanted to find out to what extent the deformity itself had justified him. "This was a curse," he wrote, "chaining a proud and soaring spirit like his to the dull earth."

To my mind, the repulsion one instinctively feels at what he did is due not so much to his actual examination of the foot—there is justice in Mr. Edgcumbe's contention that the body had been embalmed and the brain-case dissected and weighed—but to his choice of time and circumstance for doing so. He wasted no time in satisfying that curiosity; he devised a method of getting Fletcher out of the way, and this was his first thought towards his fellow-crusader. It is the callousness of that thought, its cold deliberateness, that unthinkingly repels us rather than what he actually did, about which a deal of sentimentalism has been written. When Fletcher returned, "without making any remark he drew the shroud and pall carefully over the feet of his master's corpse—he was very nervous and trembled as he did it, so strongly had his weak and superstitious nature been acted upon." Trelawny failed to appreciate the reproach of devotion so delicately conveyed. A want of fine feeling is indeed the note of this wry episode, and Fletcher has said all in saying nothing.

So much for the deed. But why did Trelawny commit it? It is obvious that the designing matter-of-factness of it was unlike his warm and impulsive nature. Trelawny was not only a man of impulse; he prided himself on so being, and both his pride and his nature would have been averse from any action which was deliberate and cold-blooded. His defects were those of his qualities; flamboyancy was the stage-value of a natural Hotspur. But his examination of the foot was free from either emotion or attitude; it was botanising on the grave of a friend or an enemy, whatever term you use. I think, therefore, that what impelled him thus out of his normal axis was his intense preoccupation with Byron's lameness, and that that preoccupation was born of his sense of inferiority to Byron in Italy, which Byron himself had done everything in his power to hammer into him. His deformity, he said, "was uppermost in his thoughts, and influenced every act of his life;" it made him savage, bitter, morbid, proud as Lucifer. It would therefore explain his conduct to Trelawny. If Byron's foot were really deformed, of what value were his judgments, and could he not rest easy at last? Though Trelawny gives a far more modest account of his life, especially in Greece, than you would expect, his confidence in himself was his wallet of Autolycus, and Byron had rifled it. He who steals my purse steals trash. . . . It was of cardinal importance to him to know once and for all whether the diabolical spirit from which he had suffered so much had been nurtured on a physical deformity. If it was, it would explain everything, and he could breathe freely once more. Trelawny did not of course put this consciously to himself; but he acted as though he did.

Now comes the curious sequel. In the *Recollections,* Trelawny wrote: "Both his feet were clubbed, and his legs withered to the knees,—the form and features of an Apollo, with the feet and legs of a sylvan satyr." Turn to the same story in the *Records,* published twenty years later, and it reads: "It [the lameness] was caused by the contraction of the back sinews, which the doctors call 'Tendon Achilles,' that prevented his heels from resting on the ground, and compelled him to walk on the fore part of his feet; except this defect, his feet were perfect." Puzzle as we may over the reason for the discrepancies in them, the statements themselves are irreconcilable. What then possessed Trelawny to publish his first and radically incorrect version of the deformity? The point about it is its pointlessness. If his purpose was defamatory, then it is a clear case of "motiveless malignity," for a man, however steeped in falsehood, does not go out of his way to lie in print about a bare fact when he knows it has only to be read to be contradicted. If Trelawny knew he was lying, then he must have known equally well that his lie would be scotched. Trelawny could be stupid enough, but this was the lie deliberate of an imbecile. The only explanation seems to be that he did not know that he was lying; in other words, that he wrote about Byron's feet not as they were but as he expected to find them. That is an explanation that tallies with everything he thought and believed about Byron's foot, with his eagerness to view it and with his whole attitude to Byron's physical life, whose inferiority to his own was a makeweight against that crushing intellectual superiority of which Byron had taken such pitiless advantage. There is nothing true or false but thinking makes it so, and Trelawny's freedom with the evidence was that of many another man—and woman—who report not what they see but what they subjectively think they see. He corrected his misstatement twenty years later because he could no longer have any doubt that he was wrong, or simply because, being no longer in bondage to the pernicious sway that Byron had over him, he could see the whole man more clearly.

A still more violent discrepancy is to come. Four days after Byron's death, he wrote to Stanhope:

> Lord Byron is dead. With all his faults I loved him truly; he is connected with every event of the most interesting years of my wandering life. His every day companion, we lived in ships, boats and houses together; we had no secrets, no re-

> serve, and though we often differed in opinions, we never quarreled. It gave me pain, witnessing his frailties; he only wanted a little excitement to awaken and put forth virtues that redeemed them all. . . . This is no private grief, the world has lost its greatest man, I my best friend.

The insincerity of a tribute much too extravagant for Trelawny to believe in is pretty obvious. Yet I doubt whether, with so instinctive a being as Trelawny, it was a conscious insincerity any more than his misrepresentation of Byron's deformity was a conscious deceit. Apart from the destination of the letter to an honest if woolly-minded doctrinaire like Stanhope, who admired Byron in all his differences from him; apart, too, from a natural softening towards a man so recently dead, does not that letter represent an uneasiness of mind lest he might have been responsible for Byron's death in urging him to go to Greece?

A week later he wrote to Mary Shelley:

> I now feel my face burn with shame that so weak and ignoble a soul could so long have influenced me. It is a degrading reflection and ever will be. I wish he had lived a little longer that he might have witnessed how I would have soared above him here, how I would have triumphed over his mean spirit.

There is that inferiority complex sticking out of him and into him like a porcupine's quills. There is the voice of Leigh Hunt. Only Trelawny did not possess Hunt's literary skill; he could not turn his torment into a literary diatribe. The inconsistency between this letter and the one that precedes it is only a surface one, glaring as it is. In those few lines there crept out of the burrows of the subconscious his true opinion of Byron, that he had manfully tried to suppress, but which had to come out in the end, as all such suppressions must erupt in time. It had lain dormant in him ever since Byron began to humiliate him, to make a fool of him, to ridicule his dearer professions and cauterise his convictions. That he sincerely believed what he wrote is, I think, unquestionable; Byron gave him no chance to think otherwise.

It is more interesting to enquire what pulled the trigger. That is probably revealed in another letter to Mary, written nearly four months (August 24th) after Byron's death, and telling her that Byron had been "the paltry tool of a weak, imbecile, cowardly being calling himself Mavrocordato. Five months he [Byron] dozed away. By the gods! the lies that are said in his praise urge me to speak the truth. It is well for his name and better for Greece that he is dead." One should, I think, take these words at their face value. Trelawny was not in the least aware that the little Byron of Italy had become great in Greece; his words go deeper than mere jealousy ot the smaller for the bigger man. At Missolonghi he had come to an open rupture with Mavrocordato, who in later days tried to have him assassinated. Things went very amiss both with the party of Odysseus and with Trelawny after he had left Missolonghi, and it was not unnatural that, without first-hand knowledge of the course of events there before Byron's death, he should have confounded Byron and the hated Prince together. The bouquets were all being handed to the do-nothing Byron, the ally of that fox, Mavrocordato, who had stolen him from the true party. Damnation! And all that Byron had done was to die. But death had showered upon him the laurel leaves that should have fallen like manna upon the man of action, and been a cool plaster to his burning wounds. Death had restored to Byron the superiority in all fields, and deprived him that still lived on even of his consolations. It was a bitterer death for Trelawny than Byron; it robbed him of his last chance to pluck the poisoned barb out of his flesh, and to show the belaurelled one that he was not the pretentious zany his persecutor had delighted to wave like a red rag before him.

Let then the most impassioned advocates of Byron *in re* Trelawny have their say and welcome. It is all true. But what they forget is that the right explanation for Trelawny's conduct to Byron—is Byron. What Byron was in Italy may be read in what Shelley wrote of him, what Leigh Hunt wrote of him, what Jane Clairmont write of him fifty years after his death. He possessed that capacity for inspiring hatred for which his hatred against himself was responsible, for which again his upbringing and environment were mainly responsible. He did his level best to make Trelawny hate him, and all that the biographers of Byron see is that he succeeded. He threw Trelawny right off his balance, and the foot and letter incidents were the result. In that Italian masquerade, we cannot separate Trelawny from Byron nor Byron from Trelawny. They must be assessed together or not at all.

One other *aperçu* that cry of torment from Trelawny reveals. How fundamental and how wonderful was the change in Byron himself when he cast his wrinkled skin, and, drawing upon his native elements, renewed himself in the glow of an emancipated being!

# CHAPTER III

## *THE POET AND THE PIRATE*

*And did you once see Shelley plain?*

§ 1

### SHELLEY THE MAN

WHAT Hogg did for Shelley's youth and Peacock for his early manhood," wrote Mr. Ingpen in his edition of the *Letters*, "Trelawny performed for Shelley's last days." Since love of Shelley is most of Trelawny's contribution to the world, as indeed of his genius, we need to examine closely the terms, conditions, and reflections of a devotion which in appearance is more incongruous than our Samson of adventure's antipathy for Byron.

What, the curious ponders, had this Elizabethan privateer in common with a visionary recluse as familiar with the world of the spirit as he was ignorant of the unprofitable uses of this world? What irresistible magnetism for this man of turbulent action had the scholar who would stand on his legs all day before a folio like a heron in vigilance upon some pool of silence? What a meeting of extremes when the brusque mariner strode along the quays at Leghorn with the frail singer of intellectual beauty, lost in reveries of Luthany and the region Elenore! It is like an Arabian Nights tale—the way this picaro, this Sinbad, salted with the world's rough courses, bursts into the charmed circle of the poet's exile and by a piety of soul no colder Academe could know is struck amazed, is conquered and for the distaff of Omphale takes the lyre of praise. So we think; how was it in reality?

### TRELAWNY'S MEETING WITH SHELLEY

Trelawny's first meeting with the most translunary of our English poets, the most unworldly and the most reviled, lends some colour to this half-true version of his devotion. It shall be told in his own words.

Two years before he met him, Trelawny had never heard of Shelley. By the Lake of Geneva in 1820, he was wont to pass the time of day with a young bookseller, who "loved literature more than lucre." One day, the bookseller said to him, "Your modern poets, Byron, Scott and Moore, I can read and understand as I walk along, but I have got hold of a book by one now that makes me stop to take breath and think." It was *Queen Mab*. How, asked Trelawny, had he got hold of it? With a lot of new books in English exchanged for French ones that but for a "prying priest" he would never have looked at. But the priest smelled out the witchcraft, and shouted out, "Infidel, Jacobin, leveller: nothing can stop this spread of blasphemy but the stake and the faggott; the world is retrograding into accursed heathenism and universal anarchy!" So the bookseller took up the small book the outraged priest had thrown down, thinking, "surely there must be something here worth tasting," for the proverb says, "no person throws a stone at a tree that does not bear fruit." That was Trelawny's first introduction to Shelley.

The next year he ran across Shelley's cousin, Thomas Medwin, and Edward Shilliker Williams at Geneva, and they told him all about the "inspired boy, his virtues and his sufferings, so that, irrespective of his genius, we all longed to know him." Trelawny was called back to England on account of his father's death, Medwin went on to Italy and the Williamses were driven to Chalon-sur-Saône in Trelawny's carriage, where he left them. He promised to rejoin them in the spring of the following year "and to go on to Italy together in pursuit of Shelley."

That was the prelude to one of the most classical friendships in the history of letters. Trelawny's decision was the turning-point of his whole life. On pure hearsay, the gossip of two strangers about a young bard of whom he had but recently heard the very name and moving in an utterly different sphere of life from his own, he made up his mind to cross half Europe to visit him. That is the right way to make decisions; that is the right way to live. There is a perfect inevitability about such inconsequence.

Early the next year, after a long journey by post and cabriolet from Paris, Chalons, Geneva, Mount Cenis and Genoa, part of the way with Captain Roberts, he arrived late at Pisa on January 14th, 1822, and after dining at the inn,

> hastened to the Tre Palazzi, on the Lung 'Arno, where the Shelleys and Williamses lived on different flats under the same roof, as is the custom on the Continent. The Williamses received me in their earnest cordial manner; we had a great deal to communicate to each other and were in loud and animated conversation, when I was rather put out by observing in the passage near the open door, opposite to where I sat, a pair of glittering eyes steadily fixed on mine; it was too dark to make out who they belonged to. With the acuteness of a woman, Mrs. Williams's eyes followed the direction of mine, and going to the door-way, she laughingly said, "Come in, Shelley, it's only our friend Tre just arrived." Swiftly

gliding in, blushing like a girl, a tall thin stripling held out both his hands; and although I could hardly believe as I looked at his flushed, feminine, and artless face that it could be the Poet, I returned his warm pressure. After the ordinary greetings and courtesies he sat down and listened. I was silent from astonishment; was it possible this mild-looking, beardless boy, could be the veritable monster at war with all the world?—excommunicated by the Fathers of the Church, deprived of his civil rights by the fiat of a grim Lord Chancellor, discarded by every member of his family, and denounced by the rival sages of our literature as the founder of a Satanic school? I could not believe it; it must be a hoax. He was habited like a boy, in a black jacket and trousers, which he seemed to have outgrown, or his tailor, as is the custom, had most shamefully stinted him in his "sizings." Mrs. Williams saw my embarrassment, and to relieve me asked Shelley what book he had in his hand. His face brightened, and he answered briskly, "Calderon's *Magico Prodigioso*. I am translating some passages in it." "Oh, read it to us."

Shoved off from the shore of common-place incidents that could not interest him, and fairly launched on a theme that did, he instantly became oblivious of everything but the book in his hand. The masterly manner in which he analyzed the genius of the author, his lucid interpretation of the story, and the ease with which he translated into our language the most subtle and imaginative passages of the Spanish poet, were marvellous, as was his command of the two languages. After this touch of his quality I no longer doubted his identity; a dead silence ensued; looking up, I asked, "Where is he?" Mrs. Williams said, "Who, Shelley? Oh, he comes and goes like a spirit, no one knows when or where."

### A LIFE-LONG IMPRESSION

So the Viking became the Skald and long into old age he was possessed of his vision, and on through the bitterness of many failures, on through the weariness of Victorian days when despotism wed to Miss Genteel spawned the brood of proprieties, and the chandelier replaced the lightnings of the indignant soul, he held fast to the love of the pard-like spirit which had held *him* with its glittering eye in the doorway of the Tre Palazzi.

The tenacity of his love was so great that, more than half a century later, when Alastors wandered no farther than the garden gate and the sword of liberty was beaten into a periwigged poker for stirring the warmth into the coat-tails of family pomp, he used to forget the asphyxiated age in which he lived and, slipping down the incline of the years, talk as though the fire in Shelley's eyes still glowed through the darkness.

It was indeed no meeting of extremes between men of such widely sundered experience, and the Arabian Nights tale, so gallantly told, of that first meeting, is based upon a first impression. The rarefied Poet coming forward to welcome the hard-bitten Pirate, each in his own proper character, the attraction of opposites, that is only the lesser portion of the truth. The reality was the warm pressure of hands between them. Between Shelley and Trelawny there existed a mutuality of spirit, an exchange of profound understanding, a natural compatibility of human intuition. They were totally absent from the intercourse between Trelawny and Byron and have been neglected in literary history, because Shelley's character is still misrepresented, even in these latter days, idealised into abstraction or prettified into an imitation in silk of his own Sensitive Plant. We have got over the moral grimacing of the Victorians at one of the most beautiful characters in the world's portrait gallery, but we cling manfully on to the ineffectual angel. And it is one of the larger merits of Trelawny's personalia upon Shelley that to the eye of any discerning reader his book destroys or ought to destroy this gross misconception of a poet as indiscriminately lauded as he was vilely slandered.

How else should Shelley have been so absorbed into the kernel of Trelawny's being, had he but viewed a luminous specimen of the rare genus, *Angelus*, winging the void? We do not clasp to our inmost minds the brief glories of ineffectual angels; we are content to view these Birds of Paradise in an aviary. Forty-eight years after the death of Shelley, Trelawny wrote to Claire:

> He (Shelley) had no honest friends; but Jeff (Hogg), Williams and I loved and did not rob him. Byron and Shelley, what a contrast—the one the incarnation of rank selfishness—the other of a bountiful and loving nature; everything that came in contact with Percy, especially women, loved him at sight—women retain and are governed by their impulses and instincts—ours are blurred if not obliterated by what we are pleased to call our reason—and that is a blind faculty and so we go on blundering—and filling the world with wrongs and wretchedness.

Was a vehement dominating masculine free-lance like Trelawny to worship the memory of mere iridescence? He glorified a man of men.

In 1829, when he was free of his Grecian misadventures, he sought to write Shelley's life and Mary refused him the materials. At the age of sixty-six, the memory-urge drove him to set right the wrong, a vindication Mary, sensitve to the world's weather, had shirked. Plunging through that world's opinion like a life-boat to the rescue, he wrote the *Recollections*[1] in the same spirit of indifference to the Ice Age of mid-Victorianism as alone he had sought Shelley out in his isolated Pisan refuge. In 1875, he told Mr. Richard Edgcumbe, "Shelley will live for ever; there was never, and never will be anyone like him," and Mr. Edgcumbe tells us that his voice which could be like that of an express darting into a tunnel, softened when he spoke of him. Two years earlier he had told Claire that the only Shelley sect was "enthusiasts like ourselves," and four years earlier still that all things were vanishing from him but his love of Shelley.

---

[1] Trelawny wrote the *Recollections* while he was living at Usk. What pulled the trigger was an invitation from Sir Percy Shelley to talk over times on the eve of the appearance of Hogg's biography,

These are the same accents as drew from him the words to Claire from Rome nearly half a century earlier when he had interred the ashes of his liege friend and fixed his own tomb beside them—"Of all the human beings I have ever met I think him the most estimable and would be near him hereafter." And Trelawny had known Shelley for only six months. Even if he took notes of his conversation with Shelley hotfoot from the Tre Palazzi, his unique presentation forty-six years later of his moving, breathing, glowing self, of the heat and rhythm of the individual man, is a feat of spontaneous evocation as marvellous as W. H. Hudson's reincarnation of his childhood in *Far Away and Long Ago*.

In both these books, time is subjectively telescoped; it possesses no real existence except as a wax for the stamping of indelible impressions. It is a mere instrument of convenience for isolating "point events." A thousand ages in Thy sight are like an evening gone. It is clear that neither Hudson nor Trelawny could thus have rolled up the landscape of time to their purposes

---

which Trelawny only read nearly twenty years after its publication. (See *Dictionary of National Biography* and p. 306).

except by the efflorescence of an intuitive sympathy with their subjects that abolished the mechanical sequences of time and the reason that depends upon it. Hogg's portrait of Shelley is utterly different; it is a record of detached observation devoid of the metaphysics of fusion. Trelawny's instinctive re-creation of Shelley belongs to another plane of literature. How acute is the contrast here between Mary and Trelawny! The wife, interminably apostrophising—"He—my own beloved, the exalted and divine Shelley—has left me alone in this miserable world,"—without a shred of inward unity with him; the friend who by casual annotation could call his animate being out of the deeps of time. A contemporary writer remarked of Trelawny, "So long as he dwells on Shelley, he is, like the visitants to the *Witch of Atlas*, 'imparadised.'" How seldom, even among lovers, is such an inspired projection of sympathy possible! Yet, when it exists, its binding force is indeed more powerful than the grave.

### POINTS OF CONTACT BETWEEN THEM

The points both of human and mental contact between them were numerous. But they do not become consistently illuminated until they are seen as interlocked within a coherent design. To trace that design, we need to find a common denominator not of thinking or feeling but of being, whence both drew those sympathies of character and attitude to life which so firmly united them. Dowden in his *Life of Shelley* has left this description of Trelawny:

> He had looked on life and the world with the eyes of a man of genius who was also a man of action. He viewed the conventional rules and proprieties of society with impa-

tient scorn; the received opinions could take no hold upon his mind; every atom of his nature was alive with vivid life; he was a modern pagan with generous instincts and a romantic imagination; and as picturesque in person as he was original in character.

Sir Sidney Colvin, who met him in 1881, six months before his death, follows this up with: "In him more than in any other single man had been incarnated two of the main active impulses which were stirring in men's minds in the days of the romantic movement of 1790–1820—the impulse to social rebellion and the impulse to remote travel and adventure."

Here then was an instinctive bond of unity—Shelley and Trelawny met on the common ground of adhesion to the Romantic Movement both in its emotional and social aspects, the one in *propria persona,* the other in ideas. They were Romantics, and the term is useful in the sense that it excludes Byron, who by circumstance if not in temperament was a realist. But the term is inadequate because it is not a definition, while Shelley was more than a man of ideas. He did not merely conceive certain ideas; he lived them. He too was a man of action, whose inspirations from within were faithfully, devotedly, translated into the actions of his daily existence. And if that is not to be a man of action, the word is meaningless. There was genuine integration in him between faith and works, inner being and outward expression; he travelled and adventured the promptings of his own soul. On this showing, and it is surely a platitude, Arnold's *mot* about the ineffectual angel is one of the crassest as it is one of the most Philistine judgments in all literary criticism.

Thus far then Shelley and Trelawny were in intimate contact. But the real point is—did they not travel by different roads from the same place? If they did, we can understand at once why Trelawny without any preliminaries except the gossip of Williams and the "well-mannered poodle" Medwin, little more than acquaintances, made that electric pilgrimage to Pisa, propelled it would seem by his subconscious self; why he was enslaved the moment he set eyes on his Poet, and why the impression Shelley made upon him in six months was retained as indelibly and with as sharply cut lineaments for another sixty years, as though time were a discarded convention. When Shelley perished, the movements of all the other members of the Pisan circle throughout their lives were centrifugal. But Trelawny was rooted to his fellow.

### SHELLEY THE PRIMITIVE

The honour of discovering the real nature of Shelley belongs to one man alone,—Richard Garnett, and he let the secret out in half a dozen lines of an article contributed to the *Fortnightly*, fifty-one years ago. Shelley said of poetry that it was "the record of the best and brightest moments of the happiest and best minds." But, as Garnett says, personal intercourse with the poets is nearly always disappointing because those moments are rare, and the observer is confronted with the discrepancy between the outer and the inner man. But Trelawny recognised that Shelley's life was "a poem of which his works were but a phase." Trelawny, that is to say, had lived his life and Shelley had lived his poetry. When he first saw those glittering eyes fixed upon him, he perceived in a flash of true inspiration that Shelley "stood nearer to the primitve source of creative energy than the rest of us." He was not merely the dreamy, gentle, guileless, unworldly idealist of our retrospective sentiment, not merely, in the words of the *Westminster Review* in 1858 "the noble soul who persisted in putting himself wrong with society, and who rashly and fearlessly launched his indignant sarcasm at the cant and bigotry and selfishness of society," but a man of extraordinary force of character, prompt, resolute, decisive, swift, vehement, strong-limbed, highly practical, and preternaturally keen in observation. And all this was because there surged up in him an elemental force whose essence is simplicity itself, howbeit many and various are its modes of operation. Trelawny saw all this because the same elemental force, though often blurred and tangled and diverted by lesser interests, moved in him.

To me at any rate this burst of critical insight makes everything clear. It explains to me why Shelley's life is all of one piece, just as Christ's was, since that dynamic energy in them both, that fiery inwardness, must always seek to mould and inform the events of outward life. It is a kind of spiritual Lamarckism, a restless and insatiable urge to break into flower, to reconcile actuality with its own imperious claims and to rid itself of that dualism between matter and spirit upon which orthodox Christianity has so fatally insisted. The man who achieved a sublime correspondence between inward values and their external embodiment in the facts of life was Christ and that is, I imagine, why Mr. Middleton Murry regards Him as the first representative of a new Genus Homo. He was nearest to the sources of creative energy, a force which visualises its own perfect form and works upon its inert yet plastic instrument, the human being in his or her particular angle of incidence to reality, to accomplish that purpose. It is, I think, the true definition of a Romantic that his terms of reference are to this inward δύναμις and not to the fabric of circumstance and institution which we call society.

Shelley, therefore, was merely transmitting the compulsion of the force within him when he sought to remake society according to its valuations. And the living of his own life with that moral courage and first-hand readiness which distinguished it throughout was because the contact between his outward life and that elemental force was immediate. He kept his lines of communication clear with his base. To say that he was a beautiful character but that his morals were all wrong is a contradiction in terms because the two were inseparable:

> For love and beauty and delight
> There is no death nor change, their might
> Exceeds our organs.

To call Shelley an atheist is irrelevant; it would be nearer the mark to see him as one of the ten Christians since Christ. As Garnett truly says, "Shelley's ideas of deity transcended those of ordinary men." In the notes to *Queen Mab*, he, a devoted student of Spinoza, wrote: "*There is no God:* This negation must be understood solely to affect a creative Deity. The hypothesis of a pervading Spirit co-eternal with the universe remains unshaken." If this is atheism, then all non-churchgoers are atheists. But as to theology, he was a complete sceptic. When a little man named Roebuck called on the Shelleys at Pisa, Shelley, so Trelawny told Rossetti, called out to him, "no admittance except for atheists and republicans."

But most irrelevant of all is to call him an ineffectual angel, and the man of doubt who fastened such opprobrium upon him has paid the penalty in himself furnishing the classic example of void-beating. Nothing could be more unlike Shelley than the verdict of another writer of the Arnold school of thought: "his were the azure and vermilion clouds that float in unsubstantial beauty through the atmosphere of an Alpine sunrise," or than the phantom of him manufactured by Francis Thompson in one of the worst written and least discriminating essays of our literature. It was little short of an insult to write of a man who pursued truth through the world's brick wall, utterly regardless of the blocks raining on his head, as a celestial philanderer who spent all his time sporting with the tresses of the sun as though they were Neæra's hair. Shelley is far too elementally simple to be boxed up in these clever word-cages, and it was Trelawny alone, in essence a most simple-minded man, who saw him and drew him as he really was. That simplicity that belongs to Desdemona, Marty South, Cordelia, and to love itself, makes such women of Shelley's company as the sophisticated Mary could never have been—and Trelawny his true Boswell.

Lastly, those few words of Richard Garnett's light up Shelley's psychological remoteness from Byron, who in vacillation[1] of character, complexity of warring impulses and over-civilised decadence was his exact opposite. How frequently the joy of the one contrasts with the weariness of the other in those last days in Italy!

Trelawny's book, though it never mentions anything about elemental forces, mirrors Garnett's revelation into the poet of supreme lyric might. All the glancing lights of talk and incident it throws upon Shelley's life at Pisa and Lerici can be traced to the same lanthorn. This was how he looked at Shelley and this was what Shelley was. It explains everything—the actions of the hero, the approach and methods of his scribe, the verisimilitude of the script.

---

[1] Byron, said Shelley, is "so mentally capricious."

## SHELLEY'S RESOLUTION OF CHARACTER

We glimpse, for instance, the pertinacity and indomitableness of Shelley's character through many an unstudied paragraph or page of the *Recollections*. "When attacked, he neither fled nor stood at bay, nor altered his course, but calmly went on with heart and mind intent on elevating his species." "I always go on," he told Trelawny, "until I am stopped, and I never am stopped." Trelawny himself gives the counterpoint to this in a letter he wrote in the *Athenæum* in August, 1878,—"His convictions were so strong that he was pursuing the right course that he was deaf to all adverse counsel."

Trelawny writes of his personal appearance as follows:

> He was tall, slim, and bent from eternally poring over books; this habit had contracted his chest. His limbs were well-proportioned, strong and bony—his head was very small—and his features were expressive of great sensibility, and decidedly feminine. There was nothing about him outwardly to attract notice, except his extraordinarily juvenile appearance. At twenty-nine, he still retained on his tanned and freckled cheeks, the fresh look of a boy—although his long wild locks were coming into blossom, as a polite hairdresser once said to me whilst cutting mine.

His bearing was in character with the feminine mobility of his features and his willowy form. But how deceptive they were! This Anacreontic shepherd, with his "stag's eyes" was, as his dusky stalwart wrote in the *Records*, "a resolute, self-sustaining man, inflexible in will, masculine in act, prompt to reply, and bold in his opinions." With his exquisite gentleness, said Trelawny to Mr. Edgcumbe, he would do what he was resolved to do. He was "more self-willed than myself."

The moment he spoke he passed from boy to man; he was a fine walker, keeping ahead of his company whenever any difficult enterprise in climbing or roughness was afoot. He was always the "poet of the open air, no gowned or slippered poetaster." "He was up at six or seven," writes Trelawny of his daily life at Pisa,

> reading Plato, Sophocles or Spinoza, with the accompaniment of a hunch of dry bread; then he joined Williams in a sail on the Arno, in flat-bottomed skiff, book in hand, and from thence he went to the pine-forest, or some out-of-the-way place. When the birds went to roost he returned home, and talked and read till midnight.

As "walking was not included among the number of accomplishments in which Mrs. Shelley excelled," his walks were nearly always in solitude and by preference in the wildest and most incult sanctuaries of nature. In Trelawny's deep old age, Miss Mathilde Blind asked him: "Did Shelley ever shut himself up to write?" "Shut himself up!" shouted Trelawny, "Never! He wrote his poems in the open air; on the seashore; in the pinewoods; and, like a shepherd, he conned the time of day exactly by the light."

Before the household had been removed to Lerici from Pisa from May 1st, 1822, onward, Trelawny one day sought his poet, disappeared into the woodland recesses of the Pisan Maremma:

After bathing, seeing nothing of the Poet, I penetrated the densest part of the forest, ever and anon making the woods ring with the name of Shelley, and scaring the herons and water birds from the chain of stagnant pools which impeded my progress.

With no landmarks to guide me, nor sky to be seen above, I was bewildered in this wilderness of pines and ponds. . . . A red man would have known his course by the trees themselves, their growth, form, and colour; or if a footstep had passed that day, he would have hit upon its trail. As I mused upon his sagacity and my own stupidity, the braying of a brother jackass startled me. He was followed by an old man picking up pine cones. I asked him if he had seen a stranger.

"L'Inglese malincolico haunts the wood maledetta. I will show you his nest." As we advanced, the ground swelled into mounds and hollows. By-and-by the old fellow pointed with his stick to a hat, books and loose papers lying about, and then to a deep pool of dark glimmering water, saying "Eccolo!" I thought he meant that Shelley was in or under the water. The careless, not to say, impatient, way in which the Poet bore his burden of life, caused a vague dread amongst his family and friends that he might lose or cast it away at any moment.

The strong light streamed through the opening of the trees. One of the pines, undermined by the water, had fallen into it. Under its lee, and nearly hidden, sat the Poet, gazing on the dark mirror beneath, so lost in his bardish reverie that he did not hear my approach. There the trees were stunted and bent, and their crowns were shorn like friars by the sea's breeze, excepting a cluster of three, under which Shelley's traps were lying; these overtopped the rest. To avoid startling the Poet out of his dreams, I squatted under the lofty trees, and opened his books. One was a volume of his favourite Greek dramatist, Sophocles,—the same that I found in his pocket after his death—and the other was a volume of Shakespeare. I then hailed him, and turning his head, he answered faintly, "Hallo, come in." "Is this your study?" I asked.

"Yes," he answered, "and these trees are my books—they tell no lies. You are sitting on the stool of inspiration," he exclaimed, "in those three pines the weird sisters are imprisoned, and this," pointing to the water, "is their cauldron of black broth. The Pythian priestesses uttered their oracles from below—now they are muttered from above. Listen to the solemn music in the pinetops—don't you hear the mournful murmurings of the sea? Sometimes they rave and roar, shriek and howl, like a rabble of priests. In a tempest, when a ship sinks, they catch the despairing groans of the drowning mariners. Their chorus is the eternal wailing of wretched men."

When they emerged into the open country from the oppressive solemnity of the pines, Shelley broke into the wildest flights of mirth and folly. We talked and laughed, and shrieked and shouted. . . . The cheerful and graceful peasant girls, returning home from the vineyards and olive groves, stopped to look at us. The old man I had met in the morning gathering pine cones, passed hurriedly by with his donkey, giving Shelley a wide berth, and evidently thinking that the melancholy Englishman had now become a raving maniac. . . . The day I found Shelley in the pine forest he was writing verses on a guitar. I picked up a fragment, but could only make out the first two lines—

"Ariel, to Miranda take
This slave of music."

It was a frightful scrawl; words smeared out with his finger, and one upon the other, over and over in tiers, and all run together in most "admired disorder"; it might have been taken for a sketch of a marsh overgrown with bulrushes, and the blots for wild ducks. Shelley said, "When my brain gets heated with thought, it soon boils, and throws off images and words faster than I can skim them off. In the morning, when cooled down, out of the rude sketch as you justly call it, I shall attempt a drawing. If you ask me why I publish what few or none will care to read, it is that the spirits I have raised haunt me until they are sent to the devil of a printer. All authors are anxious to breech their bantlings."

## HIS UNITY OF LIFE AND MIND

This is a passage whose trunk is Shelley's elementalism and the branches, pursuing their own individual patterns, are its diversity of natural expression. Shelley loved water, and cardinally the sea, as a bear loves honey and Narcissus his own reflection. His tameless spirit did find in it a necessary food for his imagination and in its depth and changing hues and primordial restlessness that sense of beginnings that evoked ultimate ends to his mind and was in harmony with his being. I cannot imagine anything less resembling the wraithlike poet pursuing his prismatic *ignis fatuus* than a passage in which Trelawny has with unconscious subtlety indicated the sympathy of his own wild energies with the man who revealed to him its mighty potentialities.

He saw in Shelley not the Prometheus who stole men's hearth-fires from heaven, but a second one who plucked the heavenly fire for men's hearts out of the bowels of the earth. How just the transition from the prophetic broodings in the forest to the jets "of mirth and folly," and how sensitive his mood to what were to him the almost psychic variations of landscape. There *was* something of the Maenad in Shelley when his cares were lifted, but the fury was redemptive, not one that gnashed and tore, exalted by liberation not frenzied by frustration.

And how inevitably is Shelley's fine scholarship brought into intimate relation with the scene! The man who, as Trelawny relates, stood stork-like on his long legs all day long before a German folio, oblivious to the decrees of bread and butter, could yet blend his learning with the solitudes of nature very much more naturally than was possible in the bookish groves of Arden. The power of an elemental like Shelley does not recognise the artificial incongruities by which lesser men are guided. His strife is always for unity.

The innermost secret of Shelley is surely that his life and mind and spirit were all of one piece. When Trelawny writes (this time in the *Records*):

> Shelley's study was in the woods, amongst the rocks, or in his boat; he never sauntered or lounged. All his motions were energetic and rapid. He was very well on a horse, but better on foot. He was a famous walker. In going up rugged paths or steep hills he was at the top whilst we strong men were not half way up,

and again on the same page:

> He was a rebel at his early school; he was expelled from college; he defied all authority, and left his paternal home and went his own way ever after. Then he defied the world's opinions in his writings from first to last. He said, "Everybody saying a thing does not make it right."

We are aware of a lucid correspondence between the motions of the body and those of the mind.

"To form a just idea of his poetry," says Trelawny after a burst of cynicism about the difference between an author on paper and in his nightcap, "you should have witnessed his daily life; his words and actions best illustrated his writings." Hogg said of him, "Shelley was more self-willed than myself," which for Hogg is a mouthful, and this is a paraphrase of Trelawny's own verdict: "Every detail of the life of a man of genius is interesting, and Shelley's was so pre-eminently, as his life harmonised with his spiritual theories." That is exactly true. Shelley's parting from Harriet was the consequence of the same moral philosophy which prevented him from putting sugar in his tea because it was made by slave labour. When Shelley is criticised for those theories, so frequently and laboriously that there is no need for us to join the throng, what is meant is that his ideas of morality were on a different plane from those of his contemporaries. Unquestionably he made a bad mistake—the mistake of a raw youth—in marrying Harriet. But the relevant criticism is surely not whether he was right or wrong to have left Harriet when their marriage had ceased to be based upon mutual love, but that, possessing certain ideas upon the sanctity of love between a man and a woman, he did or did not carry them out in his own individual case. "Love," he wrote, "is inevitably consequent on the perception of loveliness; its very essence is liberty; it is compatible neither with obedience, jealousy, nor fear; it is thus most pure, perfect and unlimited, when its votaries live in confidence, equality and unreserve." There was no more fine sentiment in those words than in the wisdom of a greater Romantic. Shelley did literally mean what he said. He was the very last person to be word-dreaming. So they called him an anarch, or, what was even worse, Utopian. If he had not carried out these ideas, he would have put himself right with the world and wrong with his own soul, the canon of reference he believed to be authentic.

Since not the most severe of Shelley's critics ventures to question the intrinsic, shall we say, virtue of those ideas, he obviously would have failed in virtue if he had failed to live up to them. What he *is* condemned for is their impracticability, and they were impracticable because they were, in the words of John Addington

Symonds, "the antithesis of ordinary morality." Thus by an injustice that hardly has a parallel in criticism, the man who strictly obeyed and put into practice ethical ideas only less lofty than those of the Sermon on the Mount, is accused of being ineffectual because the ideas themselves did not correspond with those of traditional authority. Say what we will about Shelley, we cannot call him futile. If only he could have found the right woman and not have taken the sea for his bride, what a mutation of the human spirit might he not have bequeathed to posterity!

As it is, his life was a succession of failures, as he himself recognised. But which is the truly successful man—the unworldly one in conflict with the world or the worldly one who accepts its rule-of-thumb? The life of the one is a continuous exploration of realities; of the other a series of diplomatic doublings out of their reach. The first is constructive in unison with the ferment of life—for ever breaking down and building up; the other contributes nothing to life but the "form" in which he or (more usually) she lies concealed. His or her success is in retreat, the triumph of inertia. The fearless mingling of iconoclasm with ideality in Shelley is of the very tempo of all creative energy; it bores to the heart of life and seeks to translate into the spiritual plane the biological metabolism by which we are all governed. In the same way, Shelley's metaphysics tapped the deepest sources of his subconscious and that, set free, energised their flight. Or if we glance for a moment at anthropology, it is certain that Shelley's ideas concerning the nature of man, even if borrowed from Rousseau, are more in accord with modern ethnological discovery than Huxley's, Haeckel's, Herbert

Spencer's and indeed any of the neo-Darwinian philosophers', who completely misinterpreted the evolutionary struggle by applying it to the social history of mankind and totally disregarded the evidence in generalising inductively upon primitive behaviour and psychology. It is a little hard that a man who anticipated the illuminations of modern ethnology by a hundred years should be labelled as futile.

### HIS PRACTICALITY

There are many examples from Shelley's life at Pisa and Lerici of what might be called his devoted practicality. Miss Mayne in the second edition of her *Life of Byron* justly says of him that he was the effectual angel in everybody's business but his own. And if he so often failed in his own, it was because he was always instantaneously ready to translate into action the faiths and commands of his daemon. As good an epitaph for him as Hunt's and Trelawny's would be, "The readiness is all."

Trelawny tells a story of how one day he "astonished the Poet by performing a series of aquatic gymnastics, which I had learnt from the natives of the South Sea." Shelley said:

> "Why can't I swim, it seems so very easy?" I answered, "Because you think you can't. If you determine, you will; take a header off this bank, and when you rise turn on your back, you will float like a duck; but you must reverse the arch in your spine, for it's now bent the wrong way." He doffed his jacket and trousers, kicked off his shoes and socks, and plunged in; and there he lay stretched out on the bottom like a conger eel, not making the least effort or struggle to save himself. He would have been drowned if I had not instantly fished him up. When he recovered his breath, he

said: "I always find the bottom of the well, and they say Truth lies there."

It was Shelley's promptitude which once restored Mary from a miscarriage, at the Casa Magni, on June 18th. "I took the most decisive resolution," he wrote, "and by dint of making her sit in ice, I succeeded in checking the haemorrhage." The story of Shelley's participation in the tragic affair of Claire, Byron and their daughter, Allegra, exposes the staggering ineptitude of Arnold's judgment upon a poet whose sympathies so vitally sought egress in action. Trelawny made a point of dragging Shelley to Byron's gatherings, from which he "hopped off, rejoicing," whenever he could, not because he was envious of Byron's fame—that class of emotions being a complete stranger to him—but because Byron's contact with the social world was as antipathetic to his nature as Claire herself had become to Byron. Claire was very anxious to see her child as she was about to leave Florence for Vienna, and on April 10th Shelley invited her to come to Pisa. She arrived five days later but all Shelley's intercessions with Byron, together with her own frantic letters, failed to make any impression on him. Allegra was safe in her convent and there she should stay without Claire having a sight of her.

Claire of course wrote just the wrong kind of letters to Byron and it was perversity and dislike of Claire rather than active cruelty that were at the back of his refusal. But his barbarity affected Shelley to something like fury. Mary even hinted there might be a duel between Shelley and Byron, and Shelley wrote to Claire, before she arrived, saying: "My spirits completely overcome me" and "I shall certainly take our house far from

Lord Byron, although it may be impossible to put an end to his detested intimacy." Miss Mayne, in her *Life of Byron,* quotes from a letter of Mrs. Elizabeth Parker, a friend of Claire's: ". . . I never saw Shelley in a passion before . . . he declared that he could with pleasure have knocked Byron down." When Shelley pleaded Claire's solitariness, distraction and bad health to Byron, "he saw a gleam of malicious satisfaction pass over Lord Byron's countenance." "I saw his look," said Shelley, "I understood its meaning; I despised him and I came away."

On the 23rd came the news that the child had died of typhus in the convent at Bagnacavallo. Shelley, acting on an earlier suggestion of Trelawny's, instantly sent Claire, Edward and Jane off to Spezia under the escort of Trelawny to look for a house, without yet telling Claire what had happened. On the 25th, the party returned with an account of the Casa Magni. "Met Shelley," wrote Williams in his Journal, "his face bespoke his feelings." But he was resolved she should remain ignorant of the news while in Byron's neighbourhood at Pisa. He bundled Mary and Claire off to Lerici on the 26th. "Like a torrent hurrying in its course," Mary wrote, "Shelley carried all before him," and by May 1st the whole party had taken up its new quarters. At the Casa Magni, Claire learned the news, and on the 21st returned to Florence.

In later years she confessed that Shelley was the only man she had ever loved,[1] but the record is none too well authenticated, and it may be that she loved him, as most women did except his own wife—for his championship of the wronged, herself included, the ardour of his humanity, his tireless generosity of heart, and the magnetic and irresistible impetus with which he gave practical effect to what he felt.

---

[1] This confession occurs in Mr. William Graham's *Last Links with Byron, Shelley and Keats:* "'Have you never loved, madame?' I asked. A delicate blush suffused the cheeks, and this time she made no reply, gazing on the ground. 'Shelley?' I murmured. 'With all my heart and soul,' she replied, without moving her eyes from the ground." It certainly reads too like treacly fiction to be biography,

Another eloquent example of his vehemence of action joined to a capacity for quelling difficulties, overtopping crises, disentangling confusions and smoothing discords which would have left your man of affairs in a dither, occurred less than a fortnight before his death. The Leigh Hunt nation had set sail from Genoa to Leghorn on June 28th, where they found Trelawny on the "Bolivar," "with his knight-errant aspect, dark, handsome, moustachio'd." Shortly afterwards, Hunt, now that Byron had, in Trelawny's words, "at last mustered sufficient energy to move from Pisa to Monte Nero," a suburb of Leghorn, into a new villiagatura, "not unlike the suburban, verandahed cockney boxes on the Thames," joined him there, arriving in the middle of a Byronic gale with the domestic staff.

Meanwhile, Shelley and Williams left Spezia for Leghorn in the "Ariel," and from the 2nd to the 7th of July, Shelley, who was on ill terms with Byron over the death of Allegra—"there is a great gulf fixed (between himself and Byron)," he wrote to Claire, "which by the nature of things must daily become wider,"—was reclaiming a wilderness of trouble. Between the Tuesday night when he arrived and the following Sunday, he had succeeded in herding and accommodating the host of

but, as Mr. Gribble points out in *The Romantic Life of Shelley,* there is a contemporary confirmation of it in one of Claire's letters to Byron in which she speaks of Shelley as "the man I have loved, and for whom I have suffered much."

the Hunts in the Palazzo Lanfranchi at Pisa, furnished a floor for them, and soothed the agitation of Hunt from the verdict of the Italian Dr. Vaccà who had told him his wife could not live a year (this doughty matron survived until 1857). He had calmed the ruffled and suspicious Byron who realised that Hunt's arrival meant he was little more than a pensioner, persuaded him to a quasi-cordial co-operation with Hunt over the *Liberal* and obtained the pledge of the copyright of *The Vision of Judgment* for its first number, an offer which, as Shelley wrote to Mary, was "more than enough to set up the Journal." What with Byron's not unwarranted dismay and his tendency to be, in Shelley's words, "so unstable, shuffling and equivocating," that, but for Hunt, he would have finally broken with him, his success on this, their last meeting, was indeed a labour of Hercules. Shelley truly said of himself: "It seems destined that I am always to have some active part in the affairs of everybody whom I approach." Not content with this happy issue to his negotiations, house agency and tribal organisation, he took Hunt off with him to see the sights of Pisa. On parting from him he borrowed Keats's recently published volume containing *Hyperion,* the same volume that Trelawny found in the pocket of his drowned Poet, doubled open at the *Eve of St. Agnes.* "Keep it," said Hunt, "till you give it to me with your own hands."

### PERSECUTION AND NEGLECT

Such unity of action and belief, so perfect a rendering of the Christian principle—"by their fruits shall ye know them"—is the key to Shelley's magnitude of spirit. His life expressed his being in a rhythm of beautiful precision. There was no Freudian censor on guard between the ground-floor of his thought and feeling and his builded life, and this simple readiness to live as he believed is in striking contrast with the futility of Byron's chopped-up personality, in perpetual conflict with itself.

Yet Byron had the world at his feet; he could have lived as he chose. It was far otherwise with Shelley. Trelawny wrote in the *Recollections:*

> Whilst he lived, his works fell still-born from the press—he never complained of the world's neglect, or expressed any other feeling than surprise at the rancorous abuse wasted on an author who had no readers. "But for them," he said, laughing, "I should be utterly unknown." "But for them," I observed, "Williams and I should never have crossed the Alps in chase of you. Our curiosity as sportsmen was excited to see and have a shot at so strange a monster as they represented you to be."

There is no doubt that the hail of calumnies and vulgarities (*Epipsychidion,* for instance, was, as he remarked, likened to the love affair of "a servant girl and her sweetheart") discharged from the *Quarterly Review* and other respectable journals did to a certain extent choke his fires of composition. He wrote to Leigh Hunt from Pisa on January 25th, 1822: "My faculties are shaken to atoms and torpid. I can write nothing; and if *Adonais* had no success, and excited no interest, what incentive can I have to write?" But his own diffidence and Spartan self-criticism stood more in his way than the rabble of scribes, and but for that elemental strength within him, Arnold's prismatic angel must have been brought down to sterility by the combined attacks of the abuse of the heathen, the ophthalmia of the intellectuals and the modesty of his own nature. But he said to Medwin, "This I know, that whether in prosing or in versing, there is something in my writings that shall live for ever."

Trelawny quotes Sidney Smith's testimony of the bigotry and persecution rampant in England, throughout Shelley's lifetime. "To say a word against any abuse which a rich man inflicted, and a poor man suffered, was bitterly and steadily resented," while in one year, "12,000 persons were committed for offences against the Game Laws." "Shelley's life," says Trelawny, "was a proof that the times in which he lived were awful for those who dared to maintain liberal opinions." Sidney Smith said of the Chancellor Eldon, who deprived Shelley of his paternal rights, that he was "the most heartless, bigoted and mischievous of human beings, who passed a long life in perpetuating all sorts of abuses, and in making money of them."

> Those who questioned the Divinity of Christ, or avowed their disbelief [Trelawny adds in the *Records*], were branded as felons, and every man's hand was against them. Shelley, one of the most benevolent and humane men of his time, was shunned (as if he had a pestilential disease) from his anti-Christian writings before he was twenty-one years of age.

Neglect and indifference were even more potent discouragements than active suppression. His "utter loneliness," says Trelawny, "would have paralysed any brains less subtilised by genius than his were." In his letters as well as in the *Recollections* and *Records,* Trelawny stresses the forlorn isolation of the poet again and again. In the summer of 1820 (wrongly given by the author as 1819), Trelawny was breakfasting at Lausanne with Captain Roberts, when three "pedestrian tourists" came in. "The man was evidently a denizen of the north, his accent harsh, skin white, of an angular and bony build, and self-confident and dogmatic in his opinions." But here the "icy islanders" thawed and were in such high spirits that "Roberts and I caught the infection of their mirth." The stranger expressed his disgust at the introduction of carriages into the mountains and just as he was about to leave in his own Roberts told Trelawny that the travellers were Wordsworth and his wife and sister. Trelawny at once asked him what he thought of Shelley as a poet. " 'Nothing,' he replied as abruptly. *'The Cenci?'* I said eagerly. 'Won't do,' he replied, shaking his head, as he got into the carriage."

In the *Records*, Trelawny quotes Shelley as saying, "Mine is a life of failures. Peacock says my poetry is composed of day-dreams and nightmares; and Leigh Hunt does not think it good enough for the *Examiner*. I wrote, and the critics denounced me as a mischievous visionary." Williams's Diary, part of which was published in Mary Shelley's edition of the poet's "prior works," bears in its transparent and ingenuous fashion similar witness. "Shelley's greatest fault," he wrote, "was ignorance of his own worth." "It is exceedingly to be regretted that he does not meet with greater encouragement; a mind such as his, powerful as it is, requires gentle leading." Trelawny told William Rossetti in 1872 that Shelley never believed his own poems would outlive him,[1] and that with fostering he might have been a great dramatist. Thus persecuted by the world; derided by the critics; often starving himself to print immortal poems that nobody read; shorn, exploited and taken advantage of by pseudo-friends; devoid of a particle of the Byronic vanity that might have sustained him against the Philistines; often so ill that he had to dose himself continually with laudanum; married to a woman with no real understanding of his nature, no sympathy with his mind and with half an allegiance given to the forces of conformity which hounded him out of England—Shelley's translation of spirit into deed throughout his life appears in its true light as a miracle of power, and one of the grandest examples of sheer piety, not to mention heroism of living, in the annals of great men.

---

[1] But see his words to Medwin (p. 141).

### THE THREAD BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH

It has been suggested that Shelley's frequent communings with death, and at times deliberate seeking of it, were the product of despair at crosses and frustrations more bitter even than is the usual lot of reformers. His few friends might well have said of him:

> He does him wrong
> That would upon the rack of this tough world
> Stretch him out longer.

But Shelley's carelessness of his own life as of a man familiar with two worlds "of spirit and of sense," goes deeper than this, and the theory of despair fails to explain why his last days at Lerici, shot through with intimations, forebodings and apparitions, were yet, as Trelawny's record clearly shows, the happiest, the most care-free of his life. Paradoxical as it sounds, death was always in the neighbourhood of his soul because it drew its energies from the sources of life. A spirit so elemental could not but fail to recognise any essential division between life and death. They were one, and in death life left the well-built nest. Richard Garnett has pointed out that the preternatural intensity of Shelley's waking senses enabled him to hear sounds unperceived by others, and extended to his dreams, wherein he would become visible to himself in a disembodied state. "He had seen the vision of himself," wrote Mary to Mrs. Gisborne a month after his death, "which met him as he walked on the terrace (of the Casa Magni) and said to him 'How long do you mean to be content?' "

Five days after the little company were installed in the Casa Magni on the Bay of Spezia, Williams records in his Diary:

> After tea, walking with Shelley on the terrace, and observing the effect of moonshine on the waters, he complained of being unusually nervous, and stopping short, he grasped me violently by the arm, and stared steadfastly on the white surf that broke upon the beach under our feet. Observing him sensibly affected, I demanded of him if he were in pain. But he only answered by saying, "There it is again, there!" He recovered after some time, and declared that he saw, as plainly as he then saw me, a naked child (Allegra) rise from the sea, and clap its hands as in joy, smiling at him.

Trelawny, in the *Records,* tells the well-known story of Shelley, Jane Williams, and the dinghy of the "Ariel" and I may quote a portion of it as one can read behind the lines that half-awed, half-amused and altogether devoted solicitude for his Poet which is so disarming in the disciple:

> His flashing eyes and vehement eager manner determined on the instant execution of any project that took his fancy, however perilous. He overbore all opposition in those less self-willed than he was, and women are of a trusting nature, and have faith in an earnest man. So Jane impulsively and

promptly squatted in the bottom of the frail bark. . . . The Poet, proud of his freight, triumphantly shoved off from the shore, and to exhibit his skill as a mariner rowed round a jutting promontory into deep blue water. . . . The gunwale of the boat was only a hand's breadth out of the water; a puff of wind, or ripple on the water, or an incautious movement of the Poet, or herself, and the tub of a thing that could barely sustain the weight within it would cant over and fill and glide from under them. There was no eye watching them, no boat within a mile, the shore fast receding, the water deepening, and the Poet dreaming. . . . After pulling out a long way, the Poet rested on his oars, unconscious of her fears and apparently of where he was, absorbed in a deep reverie, probably reviewing all he had gone through of suffering and wrong, with no present or future. . . . Spellbound by terror, she kept her eyes on the awful boatman: sad and dejected, with his head leaning on his chest, his spirit seemed crushed; his hand had been for every man and every man's hand against him. . . . She saw death in his eyes. Suddenly he raised his head, his brow cleared, and his face brightened as with a bright thought, and he exclaimed joyfully, "Now let us together solve the great mystery." "No, thank you, not now; I should like my dinner first," replied Jane with great presence of mind. Thus pulled back from the furthest bourn of the pioneer by the discordant tinkle of a dinner bell, and tempted by the cunning Jane to fulfil his promise of writing the words for the Indian Serenade, the Poet paddled his cockle shell back into shallow water.

Jane jumped out of the boat, upset it, and scrambled ashore, leaving Shelley underneath it, "like a hermit crab that houses itself in any empty shell it can find." "Solve the great mystery?" she said, "Why he is the greatest of all mysteries. Who can predict what he will do?—he casts a spell over everything. . . . He is seeking after what we all avoid, death." "Are you going to join your friend Plato?" were Jane's last words to him.

But he sought death, one suspects, because he was too highly charged with the fires of life to find a home for his spirit in the limitations of mortality. He outsoared the shadow of our night. "I stand, as it were, upon a precipice," he wrote of those last days, "which I have ascended with great, and cannot descend without greater peril, and I am content if the heaven above me is calm for the passing moment." "In our present gross material state," he told Trelawny, "our faculties are clouded; when Death removes our clay coverings, the mystery will be solved." The portents and premonitions that occurred so frequently at Lerici were allied not to the gutterings of vitality through adverse circumstance, but to what J. A. Symonds calls a "liberation of incalculable energies, the emancipation and expansion of a force within the soul, victorious over circumstance, exhilarated and elevated by contact with such hopes as make a feebler spirit tremble."

> That sustaining Love
> Which through the web of being blindly wove
> By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
> Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
> The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me,
> Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

Various of Shelley's poems, of course—*Alastor,* the *Ode to Liberty, Stanzas written in Dejection near Naples*—go as near to predicting his own death at the beckoning of the most tameless of the elements as any of the dreams recorded in Dunne's *An Experiment with Time* were a foreshadowing of reality. In Naples, as previously in London, he attempted to solve the mystery upon his own initiative, and Trelawny publishes a letter of his asking him to procure a bottle of prussic acid. At Lerici, dreams, prognostications, omens, glimpses of the catastrophe great to all but him alone, fell thick as the leaves on Vallombrosa, and the visions extended to others of his immediate circle. Mrs. Mason saw an apparition of him after death, but Jane, a woman of sensibility but little imagination, as Mary said, standing one evening on the terrace of Casa Magni with Trelawny, saw him pass by twice without coat or jacket. "Good God," she exclaimed trembling, "can Shelley have leaped from the wall? Where can he be gone?" "Shelley," said Trelawny, "no Shelley has passed. What do you mean?"

He frequently walked in his sleep and startled the occupants of the remote little house by riding wild nightmares. Williams records on June 23rd: "During the night Shelley sees spirits and alarms the whole house," and Trelawny in the *Records* tells how "The Poet, unconscious of everything, his eyes wide open, with no speculation in them, stood over her (Mary), upright and motionless, holding a lighted candle at arm's length." It is significant that he often told Trelawny how in case of wreck "he would vanish instantly and not imperil valuable lives by permitting others to aid in saving his, which he looked upon as valueless." No man could have been more free of the horror of death, since the majority of those devoid of such fears share with the animals the comfort of a lack of prescient imagination. But Shelley overcame death before he died, because the force of his transcendental and yet elementally simple essence projected him beyond it.

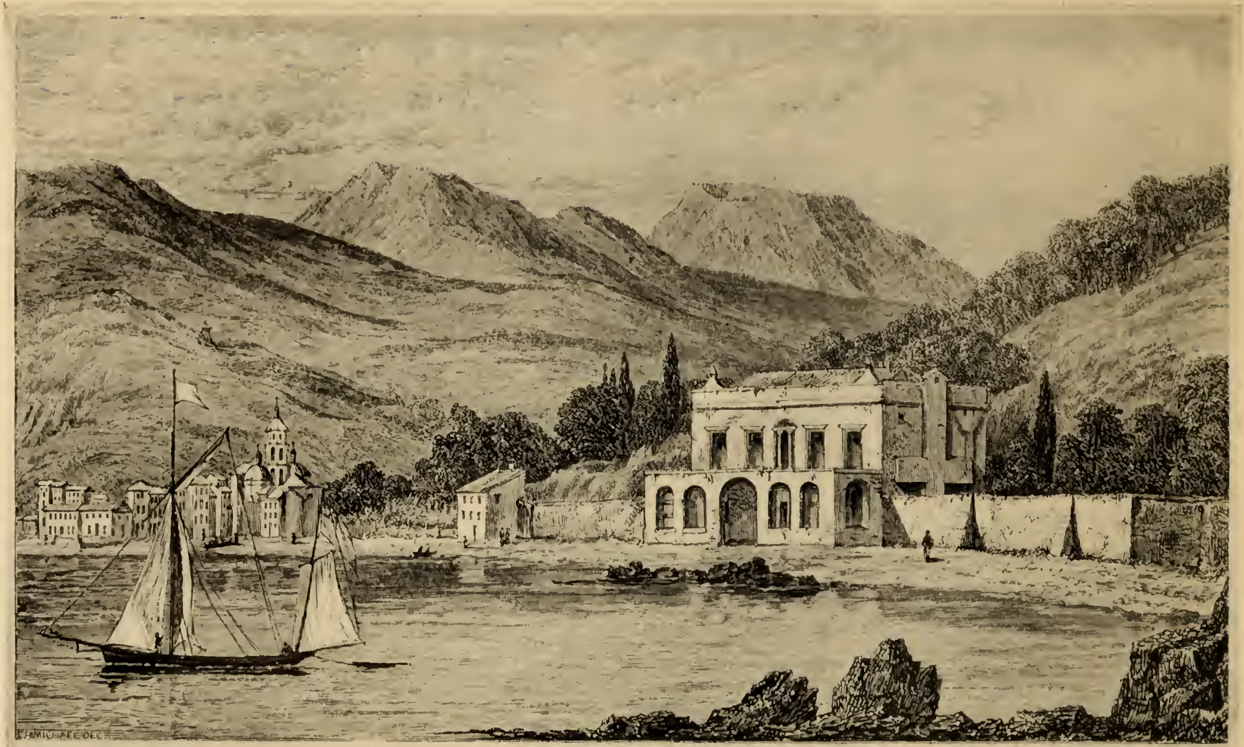
### THE CASA MAGNI

A confirmation of this view is given by Shelley's elevation of spirits and freedom from ill-health during the two months of May and June when the Shelleys and the Williamses were living at the Casa Magni on the Bay of Spezia. On May 28th Shelley wrote to Claire, "I enjoy for the first time these ten years something like health." The heroic wildness of his surroundings was in tune with his taste, while the ramshackleness of the Casa Magni afflicted Mary but certainly not him. Trelawny has left a description of it, less rhetorical than Mary's:

> The only indication of human habitation was a few most miserable fishing villages scattered along the margin of the bay. Near its centre, between the villages of Sant' Arenzo and Lerici, we came upon a lonely and abandoned building called the Villa Magni, though it looked more like a boat- or bathing-house than a place to live in. It consisted of a terrace or ground-floor unpaved, and used for storing boat-gear and fishing-tackle, and of a single storey over it divided into a hall or saloon and four small rooms which had once been whitewashed; there was one chimney for cooking. . . . The only good thing about it was a verandah facing the sea, and almost over it.

But a still better thing about it was its ideal correspondence to Shelley's present temper. "His finest work," as Symonds truly saw, "has more the stamp of something natural and elemental—the wind, the sea, the depth of air—than of a mere artistic product," and no solitary shelter from the elements could have more perfectly expressed his needs than a dwelling in such congruity with them, the barbaric grandeur of the land on which they played and the rude yet paganly joyous peasants who wrenched a living from it.

The company of his friends was wholly congenial to him. During that brief ruddy autumn, bewitched in calm, of a life which had barely passed its spring, and


E. H. MICHAEL DEL.

*Captain D. Roberts, R.N., delt.*

THE VILLA MAGNI, BAY OF SPEZIA, WITH THE "ARIEL" IN THE FOREGROUND

FROM A DRAWING BY CAPTAIN D. ROBERTS, R.N.

yet had ridden out more storms than the most wrinkled age could reckon, Jane for him played the part of that Antigone of whom he wrote: "Some of us have in a prior existence been in love with an Antigone, and that makes us find no full content in any mortal tie." Critics have always maintained that Shelley's

> Where is the love, beauty, and truth we seek
> But in our mind? (*Julian and Maddalo.*)

was a condition of being natural to him. Was it not the product of circumstance? What Shelley found in Jane was not merely a Galatea, a living poem conceived of his own poetry of human love, a lyric masterpiece of but a few lines that stilled his visionary hunger for the moment. She was also for him a refuge and a solace from the distempered Mary, ill at ease at Lerici as a suburban bourgeoise in a wigwam, and fretting for the social amenities.

Her letters to Mrs. Gisborne exclaimed upon the dirt and savagery of the natives, the discomfort of the house and its remoteness "from civilisation and comfort." "No words," she declared, "can tell you how I hated our house and the country about it," while he was writing—"I still inhabit this divine bay, reading Spanish dramas and sailing, and listening to the most enchanting music." Mary, one suspects, was stiff, inhibited and angularly nice in daily contacts, in spite or because of the outpourings of a thinly disguised complacency in her Journal; Jane, with her "eloquence of form and motions," gracious, sprightly, flower-like though with shallow roots, was a beaming light to her shade. Shelley had no opportunity—or no inclination at that time—to perceive how vain and foolish and void-hearted she was at bottom, while if she enjoyed the poet's homage, she had not yet come, as she did in later years, to preen herself upon it. Everything lovely, especially the grace and beauty of women, was bound to evolve a response from Shelley. Had he remained insensible to Jane's, he would never have loved his wife, he would merely have married her. No Frenchman can ever understand this, and that is why M. Maurois's *Ariel* is an indifferent book, and M. Maurois's *Byron* a very good one. So Jane sang and played to him on her guitar of a moonlit night on the verandah or on board the "Ariel," and something of her Botticelli nature passed into the strings and throbbed within the Poet's soul.

As for Williams, he was like what a child so seldom has the chance of being, by a candour and transparent simplicity of being full of wonderings and sturdy zests, ingenuously full of the sea and poetry and a kind of knightly manhood, not very intelligent but a born Horatio. Shelley could not but feel for him the affection that was his due from any man, but most from one in whom sympathies were ruled by intuition. A man that was without guile, as Williams was, would instantly draw the sensibilities of a poet whose spiritual antennae were so delicate. The happiness between Jane and Williams was a further blessing to the house. It shone with a tender radiance, for they were not married.

### SHELLEY ON TRELAWNY

And Trelawny? A writer in *Temple Bar* (vol. LXIII, 1881), speaking from personal knowledge of the old sea-rover, says that he at once took his place as an integral part of the Pisan circle. His sagacity, his knowledge of men and things, his energy and practical qualities delighted them all. But his kinship with Shelley went deeper than this; it was Mary rather than Shelley who was englamoured by a footlights Othello. The actual references to him in Shelley's printed works are few. When Trelawny was away at Leghorn looking after Byron's "Bolivar," Shelley wrote him on May 16th about the arrival of the "Ariel" (then the "Don Juan") at Lerici:

> We are very impatient to see you, [he says], and although we cannot hope that you will stay long on your *first* visit, we count upon you for the latter part of the summer, as soon as the novelty of Leghorn is blunted. Mary desires her best regards to you, and unites with me in a sincere wish to renew an intimacy from which we have already experienced so much pleasure.

A second letter followed on June 18th, asking him to procure a small quantity of prussic acid. "I need not tell you I have no intention of suicide at present, but I confess it would be a comfort to me to hold in my possession that golden key to the chamber of perpetual rest." In a letter to John Gisborne, written on the same day, he tells his correspondent how Trelawny was Captain of the "Bolivar": "How long the fiery spirit of our pirate will accommodate itself to the caprice of the poet remains to be seen." In a letter to Leigh Hunt, written a day later, he describes Trelawny as "a wild but kind-hearted seaman." Other references contain details about practical matters. None of these allusions, except the intimate one of confessing desire for a means to self-oblivion, are particularly revealing, nor were they likely to be. Yet how fair the scene when contrasted with that of Byron and Trelawny!

How deeply Trelawny impressed Shelley's imagination as distinguished from a fancy for a warm and exhilarating personality, appears from his sketch at Pisa of an unfinished drama, wherein Trelawny figures as the pirate of an enchanted isle.[1] Mary has left a draft of the projected play:

> An enchantress, living in one of the islands of the Indian Archipelago saves the life of a pirate, a man of savage, but noble nature. She becomes enamoured of him; and he, inconstant to his mortal love, for a while returns her passion; but at length recalling the memory of her whom he left, and who laments his loss, he escapes from the enchanted isle and returns to his lady. His mode of life makes him again go to sea, and the enchantress seizes the opportunity to bring him, by a spirit-brewed tempest, back to her island.

Unhappily, the drama did not get far enough for our pirate to appear in person, and he remains crystallised in but two lines:

> He was as is the sun, in his fierce youth,
> As terrible and lovely as a tempest.

Nevertheless, I think that this barest draft carries us much further than Williams's entry about it at Pisa on April 10th: "Trelawny dined and passed the evening. We talked of a play of his singular life, and a plot to give it the air of a romance"; further too than Mary's testimony of Shelley's love for Trelawny, written after the sea had silenced him.

It is clear that Shelley did regard Trelawny in much the same light as Rousseau and the Encyclopaedists regarded the "noble savage" who leaped through the shams and pretences of civilisation like an Arab horse through a paper hoop. Shelley's elementalism recognised a profound accord of spirit in Trelawny, wandering the pathless sea as lonely as Alastor, a man cast in heroic mould whose feet trod no measure but to his own piping, an exile from the usages of polite society, a heart uncorrupted by its formal savageries, a wild West Wind that tore the rotting leaves from the tree of life and left its branches naked for the buds of future blessedness. As Jane's melodies and Jane's graces fell upon his spirit like a lyric born of the rainbow's mingling with the foam, so Trelawny's very person evoked the response of his mightier harmonies in which sea and sky and rocks took their primeval part in the regeneration of man. The intense symbolism of Shelley's mind speaks the whole drama in those words, "a man of savage but noble nature."

---

[1] See Chapter IV for Shelley's loving gesture to Trelawny in *The Serpent is shut out from Paradise.*

And his Circe? If the pirate in the play was projected to represent Trelawny's true nature, was not she his artistic exploitation of that nature? Shelley must have detected in Trelawny that parade of romanticism and Byronic showiness which tempted and misled him so that he often fell to them, and intended to personify that self-conscious exhibitionism in the figure of the enchantress. At any rate, this draft of an unfinished drama, roughed out in a few lines, appears to me to unmask the character of Trelawny more faithfully than all the notices of other critics, whether favourable or the reverse. And it helps us to understand once and for all why Trelawny himself loved Shelley so singleheartedly and with a long lifetime of devotion, and why on the other hand he was deeply suspicious of Byron. He was at home with the one; at sea with the other. For Shelley ministered to his real self, but Byron to his make-believe. The unfinished drama outlined a story of dual personality, the one true, the other a parody of that truth, and the story is Trelawny as he was.

### THE "ARIEL"

Shelley then was happy at Lerici in a life filled with the elements as his friends and friends with the right elemental quality about them. And there was his boat, with which he sported like a dog with a bone, since to sail it both fed his nature and imagination and gave his likeness to a child, vested in every elemental, its due delivery. According to Mary and Williams, the "Ariel," built along with the weightier "Bolivar" by Captain Roberts, and on whose deck Shelley wrote much of the *Triumph of Life,* arrived at Lerici on the 12th of May. Williams, against Trelawny's advice, had insisted on his own model. "It took two tons of iron ballast," says Trelawny, "to bring her down to her bearings, and then she was never crank in a breeze, though not deficient in beam. She was fast, strongly built and Torbay-rigged." Williams also rejected Trelawny's prudent advice to add a Genoese seaman to the crew—which was Charles Vivian, aged eighteen.

Trelawny was indeed originally responsible for Shelley's seafaring, since on his second visit to the Tre Palazzi at Pisa on January 15th, he brought the model of an American schooner, and this, with searchings of heart on the part of the women, was what put the fat in the fire. Said Mary, "Our husbands decide without asking our consent or having our concurrence; for, to tell you the truth, I hate this boat, though I say nothing." Said Jane, "So do I, but speaking would be useless, and only spoil their pleasure." Mary comments on how heavy with destiny was that laughing interchange. It also bespeaks the different attitudes to life of the two women. Yet if Trelawny launched the two doomed men upon that destiny, his counsel and his frustrated resolve to accompany them on the fatal day might well have saved them.

His own account of the mooting of the "Ariel" is somewhat different. Out driving with Shelley with whom he had visited the ships in the harbour at Leghorn, Trelawny wrote:

> He [Shelley] regretted having wasted his life in Greek and Latin instead of learning the useful arts of swimming and sailoring. He resolved to have a good-sized boat forthwith. I proposed we should form a colony at the Gulf of Spezia, and I said, "You get Byron to join us, and with your family and the Williamses, and books, horses and boats, undisturbed by the botherations of the world, we shall have all that reasonable people require." This scheme enchanted him. "Well," I said, "propose this to Byron to-morrow." "No!" he answered, "you must do that. Byron is always influenced by his last acquaintance. You are the last man, so do you pop the question."

Whichever version be the true one, both are true to Shelley who leaped upon an enterprise like a cowboy on a mustang. His "boyish eagerness to possess the new toy," writes Trelawny, "from which he anticipated never-failing pleasure in gliding over the azure seas, under the cloudless skies of an Italian summer, was pleasant to behold." They drew plans on the sands of the Arno of the right dimensions for it; held councils ("with faces as grave and anxious as those of Columbus and his companions") as to the coasts they would explore, the islands they would visit and the stores they would take with them; and narrated tales of the old navigators, "Byron with the smile of a Mephistopheles standing by,"—and asking "the amount of salvage we, the salvers, should be entitled to in the probable event of our picking up and towing Shelley's water-logged craft into port."

On June 2nd, Mary wrote to Mrs. Gisborne:

> Shelley's boat is a beautiful creature; Henry would admire her greatly; though only 24 ft. by 8 ft. she is a perfect little ship and looks twice her size. When Shelley took her entirely on himself we changed the name (the *Don Juan*) to the *Ariel.* Lord Byron chose to take fire at this, and determined that she should be called after the Poem; wrote to Roberts to have the name painted on the mainsail, and she arrived here disfigured. For days and night, full 21, did Shelley and Edward ponder on her anabaptism, and the washing out the primeval stain. Turpentine, spirits of wine, buccata, all were tried, and it became dappled and no more. . . . Shelley is singularly well; this boating does him a great deal of good.

Once the "Ariel" had arrived, Shelley darted into seamanship with his usual audacity.

> They were hardly ever out of her, and talked of the Mediterranean as a lake too confined and tranquil to exhibit her sea-going excellence. They longed to be on the broad Atlantic, scudding under bare poles in a heavy sou'wester, with plenty of sea-room. I went out for a sail in Shelley's boat to see how they would manage her. It was great fun to witness Williams teaching the Poet how to steer. . . . As usual, Shelley had a book in hand, saying he could read and steer at the same time, as one was mental, the other mechanical. "Luff!" said Williams. Shelley put the helm the wrong way. Williams corrected him. . . . "Luff!" said Williams, as the boat was yawing about. "Shelley, you can't steer, you have got her in the wind's eye; give me the tiller, and you attend the main-sheet." . . . The main-sheet was jammed, and the boat unmanageable, or as sailors express it, in irons; when the two had cleared it, Shelley's hat was knocked overboard,

and he would probably have followed it if I had not held him. . . . Williams, somewhat scandalised by the lubberly manoeuvre, blew up the Poet for his neglect and inattention to orders. Shelley was, however, so happy and in such high glee, and the nautical terms so tickled his fancy, that he even put his beloved Plato in his pocket, and gave his mind up to fun and frolic.

### SHELLEY'S HARMONY OF NATURE

If boat and book did not go any too well together on shipboard, they were perfectly harmonised in Shelley's mind. Williams well illustrates how extremes met and were blended in his delicately unified personality. In a letter to Trelawny from Pisa in April, 1821, he wrote:

> Shelley is certainly a man of most astonishing genius in appearance, extraordinarily young, of manners mild and amiable, but withal full of life and fun. His wonderful command of language, and the ease with which he speaks on what are generally considered abstruse subjects, are striking; in short, his ordinary conversation is akin to poetry, for he sees things in the most singular and pleasing lights.

If ever a man lived the poetry in his soul it was he, and his poems are as truly autobiographical, as his life was a single if chequered and varied Ode. If much of his life was reading, he only read to live an intenser day. He was first-hand in whatever he thought or did, and as he thought he did, so that the disparate classifications we apply to other men, even great men, break down with him who played out his life and lived his imagination in one coherent symphony. He is the most pregnant example of unity in diversity of all our English men of letters, and if some think of him as the dreamy bard, others as the unpractical revolutionary, or as a delightful child of nature, or again as the scholar-gipsy, others as the inspired madman, and the blindest of all as a pathological specimen, they are thinking of him in arbitrary compartments, when all his streams met in one and sprang from the deeps of pure creation. Trelawny, for all his robust, terse, pungent, jocular comments, saw this perfectly and so alone has distilled into his portrait an enduring life.

That is the advantage of pottering about in the garden Trelawny has laid out to the memory of Shelley. Though the flowers you pick belong to different species and even genera, because they illustrate different expressions of the poet's life in Italy, they all flourish in the same spot of ground, and that possesses a special nitrogenous quality derived from Shelley's own ultimately simple but uniquely forcible inward vitality. He did a great many different things throughout his short life and in a great variety of circumstances, but the same generative urge is at the back of every one of them, the same particular stamp of originality upon them all. That is the reverse of true about Byron who was so incalculable, wayward as a Caliph, and perpetually hiding behind the latest Byron in his terror of revealing himself. But Shelley was always giving himself away, and that is his life.

Here are two disconnected stories of him given by Trelawny in the *Records*, but both are different facets of that primary quality which poured out its lustre from within. Quixote and his rugged squire had returned from a visit to Leghorn, and the latter dropped in to the Shelleys to dine.

> Finding no one about the house, I went into his library; the Poet was untying the bag of Scudi that we brought from Leghorn. Standing up, he turned out the bag on to the

> hearth-rug, and the glittering coins bespangled the floor. It was amusing to see him scraping them together with the shovel of the fireplace; having adroitly got them into a heap he pressed them as flat as he could with his foot, then skilfully with the shovel divided them as nearly as possible into two equal portions; one of the halves he divided again into two equal portions by guess-work, saying to Mary, "That half will feed the house and pay the rent," then pointing to the smaller portion, he said, "that will do for you. This is my portion." Then he spoke lower to her that I might not hear, but she told me that he said, "I will give this to poor Tom Medwin, who wants to go to Naples and has no money." I said to Mary as we were dining, "Why, he has left nothing for himself."

Of course, that sort of thing won't do; it is too absurdly Christian, and would pull the pillars of our grand and greedy civilisation upon our heads. But it was Shelley, and that was exactly what he wanted to do. It was also Christ, and that is perhaps why this tale of coins has so Scriptural a ring.

Or take the aromatic story about Shelley and the party at the Casa Magni which Trelawny told Rossetti in 1870 and incorporated into the *Records* eight years later. We are present at a luncheon party.

> The talk [writes Trelawny, settling down to enjoy himself], was here interrupted by a concussion of glass and crockery, and a vehement exclamation, "Oh, my gracious!" from one of the trio of ladies, drew all eyes her way. Appalled by the sight, the ladies instantly averted their gaze and held up their hands, not having fans, in mute despair. Had it been a ghoul, he would have been scoffed at, as they prey on the dead; if it had been a spectre or phantom he would have been robed, and therefore welcome, for they are shadowy and refined spirits; but the company was confronted by an apparition not tolerated in our chaste and refined age even in marble—by our poet, washed, indeed, for

> he was just out of the sea, not in an evening costume, nor was his hair dressed, as his wife had promised it should be; but, like Adam before the fall, the brine from his shock of hair trickling down his innocent nose. . . . Small fragments of seawood clung to his hair, and he was odorous of the salt brine—he scorned encumbering himself with combs or towels. He was gliding noiselessly round the two sides of the saloon to his room, and might possibly have succeeded unnoticed, or certainly unchallenged—as the Italian maid, with accustomed tact, had walked by his side, carefully screening him from the company—but for the refined and excitable lady calling attention to such an unprecedented license even in a poet.
>
> The simple and innocent bard, grieved at having given pain by his alleged breach of etiquette, felt bound to explain his case, so, standing beside the complainant, and drawing himself up (as the novelists have it) to his full height, with the air and accent of a boy wrongfully accused, said, "How can I help it? I must go to my room to get my clothes; there is no way to get to it but through this. I have not altered my hour of bathing, but you have changed yours for dining. The skittish skiff has played me one of her usual tricks by upsetting all my clothes in the water; the land breeze is getting up, and they will be drifting out to sea again, if I don't make haste to rescue them." His blushing wife could not bandy words with a sea monster. Having thus refuted to his own satisfaction the implied censure on his manners, he, without noticing any one else, glided from out the puddle he had made on the floor into his dormitory. . . . In a few minutes he reappeared, rushing down to secure his former attire. Speedily coming back, he held up a book, saying, "I have recovered this priceless gem from the wreck (Aeschylus)." He then took his place, unconscious of having done anything that could offend any one.

Even in the circumstances of the boat-wreck, no other man could have escaped a just reprobation on the part of others and acute embarrassment on his own for such an outrage on the decencies. But such primitive simplicity in him, that would have been both tasteless and ridiculous in a lesser man, makes the incident a sovereign revelation of his character. Shelley was indeed always giving himself away; he built up no hard carapace against the shocks of the world, and so he got hurt often enough. But to call him unpractical and ineffectual on that account is the nadir of futile criticism. His knowledge of the world was ten times more experienced than that of the man of affairs, simply because he *was* always giving himself away, wearing his heart on his acts. He knew what he was in for because he got it, but he went dauntlessly on all the same, for his internal daemon drove him. Trelawny has been called a liar by others than Byron, but he could not have invented Shelley, of whom he wrote, "there never has been nor can be any true likeness of him," and who reveals in all the Trelawny stories the same crystalline nature, the same unequivocal truth to himself. It is Shelley himself, not dates and references and cross-checkings, who vindicates the essential truthfulness of his bluff disciple.

### THE PURE IN HEART

The differences between them are both obvious and superficial. Trelawny was an illiterate man—he could not even spell; Shelley was a passionate scholar. In refinement and subtlety of mind they could not meet each other and Trelawny had little or no imagination. Though Shelley's experience of life was as crowded as Trelawny's, if less geographically spacious, the one was weather-worn, the other untouched by the world. It is usually taken for granted that Shelley had no sense of humour, whereas Trelawny's was abundant. But the story of the pious inscription written by a priest at the foot of Mont Blanc, testifying to the Creator's works of wonder and signed "P. B. Shelley, Atheist," discloses a gleam of irony which might even be called grimly satirical. Shelley, again, though even more obstinate, resolute and defiant than Trelawny himself, is not to be compared with the latter in his overbearing fashion of accomplishing his will. Shelley was pertinacious with an insidious gentleness; Trelawny went through an obstacle like a cavalry charge. Certainly, Shelley was as innocent of Trelawny's splash of cynicism as Trelawny of Shelley's purely creative genius, nor did the latter, unlike his disciple, ever put on fancy dress.

And so I might go on, collecting dissimilarities like a squirrel hoarding nuts. The squirrel frisks off upon some new volatile quest and forgets his nuts. We forget the secondary differences of temperament, idiosyncrasy and character in that they met as romantics, elemental spirits, seceders from the world's way, the one as a secular saint, the other, if you will, as a sinner pure in heart. They loved and understood each other, being of the rare company of the pure in heart.

That virtue, the fount of all virtues, was in its primal spontaneity pre-eminently Shelley's. It may appear that I have, in insisting upon its many aspects and manifestations throughout his intercourse with Trelawny, neglected the shades of a nature whose life and art were so irradiated by it. But Shelley at Pisa and Lerici had outgrown the more callow and spendthrift flights and confused orientation of his youth. In Italy, he knew what he was about and took off from a definite terrain of self-realisation towards a loftier but visualised mark. We cannot be sure that he would have achieved those revelations which are peculiarly Blake's, those quintessences of human wisdom reached in the *Proverbs of Hell,* in "Silently, invisibly, he took her with a sigh," in "He that catches the joy as it flies, Lives in Eternity's sunrise," and many another freight from the richest mines of the knowledge of life, alchemised into a streak of golden light. But when the sea took him, he was ready to fly into the sun, because he was made whole, in the Scriptural sense of integrity with the modern one of integration. He was rid of superfluities and distractions, and his entire being responded to the motions of the creative force within in a flawless working from the unseen into the palpable. Such harmony made the most perfect of his works of art—himself.

He was called the ineffectual angel, but did ever a poet in our annals, fresh as he was from writing *The Triumph of Life,* triumphant in a metre—the *terza rima* —that all other English poets have shirked or fumbled, go down to his death in such a triumph of self-conquest, with the fearlessness of a sailor, the audacity of a great heart and the courage of a lion? He was cut off in the first steps upon the plateau of his prime, with incoherence and immaturity outlived, with all his glorious powers seasoned, fortified in the fire and gathered up for their spring into yet newer conquests. But the manner of his taking-off, in heroic conformity with a life in which deed and devotion and genius were all one, a little compensates us for the poems unwritten and the deliverances unveiled.

### THE ROMANTIC IDEA

In a volume published last year called *The Proving of Psyche,* by Mr. Hugh Fausset, the writer sought to re-establish the romantic ideal as a solvent for the disintegrations of the modern world. Aesthetic, human and religious values, he argued, were one, and human consciousness is exploring a new synthesis away from a systematised Christianity with its dualism of body and spirit to a Christian art of living. The primitive possessed a unity of being with nature and perceptual experience which was lost when the critical intelligence became separated from the instincts in the process of civilised development. The unconscious identity of man with nature was replaced by a conscious dualism between the intellect and the intuitive emotions which has made so serious dislocation into the harmonies of life that man cannot ultimately survive it. The victory of the one implies the defeat of the other, so that man has become at enmity with life instead of shaping it to his purpose.

The problem of the future is to secure a liberating coöperation between thought and instinct, and those who have sought it have been the saints and poets of the romantic tradition. Their hunger has been to give themselves positively to life as the flower by its form, colour and scent, the bird by its song, give themselves to the spring sunshine, but with a delighted awareness "not only of their own identity with the deepest rhythm of life, but of their power to express its purpose purified by all the faculties of an informed imagination." The primitive unity is reaffirmed upon the plane of imaginative values. Negation is the real evil, and consciousness must be spiritually restored to the creative purpose underlying all different and conflicting elements of life.

For life is not a Darwinian conflict but a series of creative variations in the animal world which has preceded the same essential of progress on the social and individual plane of humanity. This conflict or dualism Mr. Fausset illustrates politically by the old Balance of Power between nations, economically by the division of classes, sexually by the dominance in the last century of male egotism. In love between men and women, the old dualism is very slowly being reconciled by a new unity of equals, in which women will be or ought to be "intelligently instead of blindly instinctive," and neither will be any more ashamed of the senses "running their live sap, and the minds companioned and the spirits made one by the whole-natured conjunction" as Meredith says.

Man suffers, proceeds Mr. Fausset, not from an excess of instinctive force, but a want of instinctive virtue. The war between the conscious mind and unconscious instinct can only exacerbate the inner discord of the civilised human being. The only way out is for man to abandon the denial and learn the expression of his instincts. This, of course, involves a total revaluation of our ideas about nature, and Mr. Fausset might with advantage have delivered more than a few isolated volleys upon the erroneous Victorian belief (based upon contemporary social conditions) in natural conflict and primitive pugnacity, the old "red in tooth and claw" theory which has done more harm than all the criminals of history, even if we include those within the law.[1] Conflict, he says, is out of harmony with the creative purpose of nature and contrary to the modern scientific recognition that matter is spiritual in essence.

---

[1] See my *Heritage of Man* (1928) for a full treatment of this subject.

Man, he continues, will be forced to acknowledge what this revaluation implies or he will perish. The Churches can only mislead him because their theology and the morality fashioned from it is dualistic and in opposition to the words of Christ—the supreme example of a unified personality, who realised that the creative force in nature could achieve its perfect expression only through the creative values in man. But the real followers of Christ are the poets who sought fulfilment of being in thought and of thought in being, and whose moral wholeness or health (the same words, by the way) was not content with anything less than a complete response to life. They justify the "yes" of the instincts to life for the "no" of the Puritans, more enslaved by the senses than the Pagans who accepted and regulated them, while the banishment of the "good life" to the regions of ideal bliss destroyed the indispensable relation between fact and imagination. It is the poet who sees the kinship between his own mind and that of the universe, a mind now recognised by science as inherent in all life. Man cannot revert to the primitive, but he can and must express the organic purpose implicit in the universe by playing the creator where once he was the creature. He can do so without fear since new knowledge opens up more and more affinities between natural processes and human values.

Mr. Fausset quotes an extract from Katherine Mansfield to light his theme:

> I can no longer live one way and think another. . . . I really can't go on pretending to be one person and being another, any more. It is a living death. So I have decided to make a clean sweep of all that was superficial in my past

life, and start again to see if I can get into that real, simple, truthful *full* life I dream of.

What was superficial to her was a morality which denied either the senses or the mind. She had to think more truly by living more truly and to live the truth by thinking it. The true artist absorbs the power and richness and diversity of life through the senses, and orders and values it through his mind. Thus mind is married to body and the two are reborn as a soul, a completed personality, and the world of nature and of man is reborn in him. All things are unified in the integrity of the artist's experience. This achievement is what Mr. Fausset calls a science of imagination, wherein the conflict of flesh and spirit with its dark fable of original sin and blood appeasement is overpassed in the unifying love which "casteth out fear." The artist is the prophetic soul of the world whose more sensitive humanity and greater concern for truth supersede the dualisms of conventional morality. In becoming reconciled with himself by such affirmations, he is reconciled to God. He transcends the natural without denying it.

### SHELLEY'S EXPRESSION OF IT

If it be possible to sum up into one word Mr. Fausset's brave plea for unity between aesthetic, human and religious partisidedness, that word would be Shelley, whom to my astonishment Mr. Fausset barely mentions. Shelley as artist, man and Christian, three in one, perfectly embodies the true romantic tradition as expressed in Mr. Fausset's large but, I believe, authentic claims. Whatever the imperfections of his life, the immaturity of his ideas, the failure of his Promethean vision, he is that very artist who reconciles the Pagan with the Christian ideal;[1] who gave all of himself away into a positive relation with life; who overcame the ancient dualism of civilised artifice by a new unity born of his own elemental sympathy with the primitive innocence; who transcended the natural in accepting it, and whose whole life was an arduous heroic entering upon that real, simple, truthful, full life that he and Katherine Mansfield dreamed of in common.

### BACK TO THE ELEMENTS

On Monday, July 8th, after the Poet's last human service to the Hunts, "I," wrote Trelawny, "went with Shelley to his bankers and then to a store. It was past one p.m. when we went on board our respective boats—Shelley and Williams to return to their home in the Gulf of Spezia; I in the 'Bolivar' to accompany them into the offing." Had Trelawny escorted them as he had intended, he would probably, as he often declared, have saved them. But the quarantine officers kept him in the harbour of Leghorn. In spite of this, of the threatening weather, and Captain Roberts's warning, Shelley supported Williams's anxiety to be off; "sullenly and reluctantly I re-anchored, furled my sails and with a ship's glass watched the progress of my friends' boat." A thunder-squall swept the oily sea for twenty minutes, and when it passed, the "Ariel," run down by a felucca,[2] had plunged with its precious freight to the bottom. He whom Hunt called "so seraphical a thing of the elements" went back from fire to water.

---

[1] Shelley was perfectly consistent in venerating the "Sermon on the Mount" and avowing himself atheist.

[2] See Appendix II.

## § II

### THE BURNING OF SHELLEY

Trelawny remains embedded in the popular imagination, not as the Pylades of Shelley, nor as the critic of Byron, nor as the generous friend of Mary Shelley, nor as the member of a famous literary circle, nor as the author and liver of *The Adventures of a Younger Son,* nor as the fellow-in-arms of Odysseus in the Greek War of Independence—but simply as the classical hero who performed the last rites for the body of Shelley. The story of that cremation on the lonely sands near Viareggio is as world-famous as the burning of Patroclus, the sacrifice of Iphigenia or that portion of the Will of Shakespeare in which he left his wife his second-best bed. It behoves us, therefore, to treat it with biographical deference, and indeed something of Shelley's own magnitude of spirit appears to have passed into Trelawny during that awful ceremony and to have invested him with a marmoreal grandeur, with the stature of a demigod against the flames of the funeral pyre. It was his supreme gesture in honour of him whom his heart deified and must be faithfully represented in his own words.

> During the whole of the proceedings that took place, [wrote Leigh Hunt in *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries*], Mr. Shelley's and Mr. Williams's friends were indebted to Mr. Trelawny for every kind of attention; the great burden of inquiry fell upon him; and he never ceased his good offices, either then or afterwards, till he had done everything that could have been expected to be done, either of the humblest or the highest friend.

It is to be noted in the history of those desolate days how, by right of discipleship to Shelley, this unlettered buccaneer took the leadership at a bound over his literary intimates of long standing like Byron and Hunt. The bodies of Shelley and Williams were not washed on shore until ten days after the foundering of the "Ariel" on July 8th, and in the *Recollections* Trelawny relates how he conveyed the news to the two distracted women who had been twelve days in suspense, bitterly aggravated by the receipt of Hunt's letter to Shelley on the 11th, saying, "Pray write to tell us how you got home, for they say that you had bad weather after you sailed Monday, and we are anxious." "The next day I prevailed on them," Trelawny says, "to return with me to Pisa. The misery of that night and the journey of the next day, and of many days and nights that followed, I can neither describe nor forget." But his unobtrusive offices to them belong more properly to the next chapter. His dues of archaic and traditional veneration to Shelley himself shall conclude the present one. They shall be given in full, for his rites to the dead possess a rare appropriateness; they celebrated the greatest of all mysteries, that union of the natural with the spiritual, which was Shelley.

Trelawny has written no fewer than five different accounts of the burning of Shelley and Williams—one in the *Recollections*, a repetition of it in the *Records* with a few lines of insignificant addition, an appendix to the *Records* and two British Museum manuscripts, one of which was republished by Buxton Forman in his edition of the *Letters* in 1910. The Appendix is simply a selected abstract of these manuscripts, both of which were plainly written immediately after the events recorded in them.

They differ from Trelawny's published versions not only in being simpler, fuller and freer from literary top-dressing, but in authenticity of record, since in the *Recollections* he adopts Hunt's eleven hours for the length of the journey in the "Bolivar" from Leghorn to Viareggio on August 13th, instead of the eighteen hours given in both manuscripts. In the printed versions, he was relying partly upon memories stored "in some close corner" of his mind for thirty-six years, so that the manuscripts, issuing first-hand from the writer's instantaneous impressions, clearly merit priority of place in this chapter. As Buxton Forman points out, they also corroborate Trelawny's date, August 13th, as the day of the "Bolivar's" voyage, which Dowden corrected to the 14th, on the ground that the body of Williams was burned on the 15th, the day after Trelawny's departure from Leghorn. The voyagers started very early on Tuesday, the 13th, arrived the same night, waited for Byron and Hunt on the 14th, and burned Williams's body on the 15th.

I select the second manuscript, a communication to Leigh Hunt, and published in a much abridged form in his *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries* (1828), for insertion here, because it is freer of erasures, misspellings and what Buxton Forman calls "higgledy-piggledy sentences" than the first, and partly because it is a little fuller and contains at the end the glowing appreciation of Shelley and Williams lacking from the first. Buxton Forman, the best possible editor of so inconsequent an author as Trelawny, does not appear to have been aware of the existence of this second manuscript, which contains interlinear autograph corrections by Leigh Hunt and a note in Byron's hand declaring his absence in the "Bolivar" during the actual burning of Shelley after the exhumation on August 16th. There are few material but numerous verbal discrepancies between the two manuscripts, the most important of the former being that the account here reproduced does not mention that Trelawny handled Shelley's heart,[1] while neither manuscript mentions that he snatched it from the flames as the printed versions record. Both the manuscripts are written in the same unsophisticated vein, and I print the second in full regardless of the fact that there is some repetition and that a few of the details are unavoidably sickening for a queasy stomach.

## Loss of the Don Juan.[2]

Mr. Shelley, Mr. Williams (formerly of the 8th Dragoons) and one seaman Charles Vivian left Villa Magni near Lerici a small Town situated in the Bay of Spezia on the 1 July at twelve oclock a.m. and arrived the same night at Leghorn.

Their boat, the Don Juan, had been built for Mr. Shelley at Genoa by a Captain of the Navy. It was 24 feet long, eight in the beam, schooner rigged, with Gaff Top-sails etc., and drew four feet water.

On Monday the 8 of July at the same hour they got under weigh to return home, having on board a quantity of household articles, four hundred dollars, a small canoe, and some valuable manuscripts. At half past twelve they made all sail out of the harbour with a light and favourable breeze steering direct for Spezia. I had likewise weighed anchor to accompany them a few miles out in Lord Byron's Schooner the Bolivar, but there was some discussion about papers from the Guard boat and they fearful of losing the breeze, sailed without me. I reanchored and watched my friends till their boat became a speck on the horizon which was growing thick and dark with heavy clouds moving rapidly and gathering in the S.W. quarter. I then retired to the Cabin where I had not been half an hour before a man on deck told me a heavy squall had come on. We let go another anchor—the boats and vessels in the roads were scudding past us in all directions to get into the harbour and in a moment it blew a hard gale from the S. W. the sea from excessive smoothness, foaming, breaking and getting up into a very heavy swell. The wind having shifted was now directly against our friends. I felt confident they would be obliged to bear off for Leghorn and feeling anxious to hear of their safety staid on board till a late hour, but saw nothing of them. The violence of the wind did not continue above an hour—then gradually subsided and at 8 o'clock when I went on shore it was almost calm. It however blew hard at intervals during the night with rain and rapid lightening which struck the mast of a vessel close to us shivering it to splinters, killing two men and wounding several others. From these circumstances becoming greatly alarmed for the safety of the Don Juan a note was dispatched to Mr. Shelley's house at Spezia, their reply to which stated that nothing had been heard of him and his friend, which augmented our fears to such a degree that couriers were dispatched on the whole line of coast from Leghorn to Nice to ascertain if they had put in any where, or if their had been any wreck, or indications of losses by sea. I immediately started for Via Reggio, having lost sight of the boat in that direction. My worst fears were almost confirmed on my arrival there by news that a small canoe, two empty water barrels and a bottle of brandy, had been found on the shore—which things I recognized as belonging to the boat, but yet had warm hopes they had been thrown overboard to clear her from useless lumber in the storm; and it seemed a general opinion that they had missed Leghorn and put into Elba or Corsica. Nothing more was heard for 8 days and this state of suspense becoming intolerable I returned from Spezia to Via Reggio where my worst fears were confirmed by the information that two bodies had been washed on shore, one on that night, very near the Town, which by the dress and stature I knew to be Mr. Shelley's. Mr. Keats's last volume of poems, "Lamia, Isabella, etc.," open in his jacket pocket confirmed them beyond a doubt, though such parts of his flesh as were exposed, such as his face and hands, had been so destroyed and decomposed in the sea as not to leave a trace of what they had been. The other body which had been found and buried on the beach 30 hours previous—with only part of a shirt hanging in shreds and drawn over the head—a black silk kerchief tied loosely round the neck, stockings and one boot. This body which was found near the Tower of Migliarino on the Tuscan shore about 4 miles from his companion, was subsequently beyond a doubt identified as Mr. Williams. He was likewise shockingly disfigured—the face neck head & hands being fleshless, the other parts of his person not having been touched I think proves that the body had been stripped on its first removal from the water. The seaman's body Chas. Vivian was not found for nearly three weeks and in such a state as to leave his identification doubtful. It was interred near the spot on which a wave had washed it in the vicinity of Massa.

---

[1] See Appendix 1.

[2] The text is printed just as Trelawny wrote it, with no corrections as to grammar, syntax, etc.

After a variety of applications to the Lucchese and Tuscan Governments, and our Embassador at Florence, I attained from the kindness and unwearied exertions of Mr. Dawkins an order to the officer commanding the tower of Migliarino near to which the body of Lieutenant Williams (formerly of the 8th Dragoons) had been cast on shore and buried in the sand, that the body should be at my disposal. I likewise obtained an order to the same effect to the Comandant of Via Reggio to deliver up the remains of his companion Mr. P. B. Shelley, it having been decided by the friends of both parties that the bodies should be reduced to ashes by fire as the readiest mode of conveying them to the places where the deceased would have wished to repose, as well as removing all objections of the breach of Quarantine laws which had been urged against their being disinterred. To execute what became necessary I ordered a furnace of iron of the dimensions of a human body,[1] supported by a frame, two feet from the ground, and had two small boxes about the size of writing desks, covered with black & a brass plate fastened on the top inscribed with Mr. Williams's name & date.

---

[1] "Five feet long, two broad"—from the version published by Buxton Forman in the *Letters*.

Every thing being now in readiness I embarked on board Lord Byron's Schooner under my charge with my friend Mr. Shenley and sailed on the 13th of August. After a tedious passage of 18 hours we anchored off Via Reggio & fell in with two small vessels I had hired at Leghorn some days before for the purpose of ascertaining by the means used to recover sunken vessels, the place in which my friends' boat had floundered. They had on board the Captain of a fishing boat, who having been overtaken in the same squall had witnessed the sinking of the Don Juan without (as he says) the possibility of assisting her. After dragging the bottom in the place which he indicated, for 6 days, without finding her, I sent them back to Leghorn, and went on shore. The Major commanding the Town, with the Captain of the Port, accompanied me to the Governor: he received us very courteously & did not object to our removal of the body, but to burning them as the latter was not specified in the order; however after some little explanation he assented and we gave the necessary directions for making every preparation to commence our painful undertaking the following morning. But as Lord Byron and Mr. Leigh Hunt had declared their intention of attending and they were not yet arrived, I sent a Courier in the evening requesting his Lordship to join us as early as possible; to which I received his reply promising to be at the Tower of Migliarino in the vicinity of Mr. Williams's grave at noon.

Having reshipped every article we could think of as essential I embarked in a Government boat accompanied by Mr. Shenley and an officer from the Health Office, and after rowing four miles along the coast landed at a railing running into the sea which was the boundary line of the Lucchese and Tuscan States. From thence we walked along the beach for a mile and were joined by Lord Byron and Mr. Leigh Hunt, together with an officer from the Health Office of Leghorn the sargeant of the Tower and four dismounted dragoons, having mattocks, spades, hooks, to disinter the body. I had sent people on with the furnace and a tent,—wood we found in abundance on the beach, old trees and parts of wrecks: the spot where the body lay was marked by an old weather beaten sort of a tree placed at its head—within a few paces there was a rude built shed of straw [1] providing a temporary shelter for soldiers at night when [performing] the coast patrole duty. The grave was at high water mark, some eighteen paces from the surf, as it was then breaking, the distance about four miles and a half from Via Reggio; the magnificent Bay of Spezia on the right; Leghorn on the left at equal distances of about 22 miles. The headlands projecting boldly and far into the sea, forming a deep and exceedingly dangerous Gulph, with a heavy swell & strong current generally running right into it. A vessel embayed (*sic*) in this Gulph overtaken by one of the squalls is common upon the coast, if it continued for any length of time, is almost certain to be wrecked, the loss of small craft is incalculable, and the shallowness of the water and the breaking of the surf, preventing their approaching the beach, or boats going out to assist them, the loss of lives is equally great. It was in the centre of this bay, about four or five miles at sea, in 15 or 16 fathom water, with a light breeze under a crowd of sail, that the Don Juan was suddenly taken slap a back by a sudden and very violent squall, and it is supposed that in attempting to bear up under such a press of canvas, all the sheets fast, being unprepared, and with only three persons on board, she filled to leeward, and having two tons of iron ballast, and not decked, went down on the instant, not giving them a moment to prepare themselves by even taking off their boots, or seizing an oar.[2] Mr. Williams was the only one who could swim and he but indifferently. His body after being seven days in the water was washed on shore on the spot we were now at, dreadfully disfigured so that it was impossible to identify him by his person, and of his dress there only remained part of his shirt, a black handkerchief, stockings & one boot. The remainder, I have no doubt, with his watch and money had been rifled by those who first discovered the body, as the only parts disfigured or destroyed were the hands, face and head, consequently the dress had protected the rest. The situation was well adapted for the grave of a man of his imaginative cast of mind, and I wished his remains to rest undisturbed, but it was willed otherwise. Before us was a boundless view of the Mediterranean, a relief to the eye was furnished, the Isles of Gorgona, Capraja, Elba and Corsica and in the back ground was an equally boundless range of the Appennins.

---

[1] In the Buxton Forman version the shed is said to be built "of boughs of trees and covered with reeds."

[2] This conjecture of what happened to the "Ariel" is omitted from the Buxton Forman version.

The scene was finished in the immediate vicinity of our operations and all around us by large tracks of thick wood, stunted and twisted into fantastic shapes by the sea breeze and the poverty of a deep, loose, sandy, burning soil. At three or four miles apart along the whole line of coast stood high, antique looking towers, surmounted by turrets and flagstaffs, for the double purpose of preventing smuggling & inforcing the quarantine laws, which are rigidly observed—scattered on the fore-ground lay all the implements to be used, furnace, spars, boathooks, wood &c. The heat was intense, the sand being so scorched as to render standing on it painful. Mr. Shenley and myself were occupied with the soldiers in clearing away the sand and anxiously watching the first signs of the appearance of the body. I first pulled out a black silk handkerchief then a collar of a shirt, which from its peculiarity I knew to be my friends,[1] and a boot which we compared with one brought for the occasion, and which removed every doubt. We then came to some loose brushwood, on the removal of which, the head, or rather skull, for it was almost fleshless, appeared. The body was now wholly uncovered, at least what remained, for it was dreadfully mutilated, and both the legs came away on attempting to move it. The hands and one foot were entirely gone. We collected together all that remained and put them into the furnace which we removed to leeward of the hut. Lord Byron had often declared he could recognize him by the form and peculiarities of his teeth; he examined the face and said that had nothing else remained he would have sworn to his identification. Having now made a funeral pile with faggots all around, and green branches on the top, I set fire to it. Lord Byron, Mr. Leigh Hunt, Mr. Shenley & myself gathered round, throwing frankincense, salt and wine. Lord Byron looking at the shapeless, limbless mass as it was dragged from out its sandy grave said—"What is a human body? Why it might be the rotten carcase of a sheep for all I can distinguish!" and further continued pointing to the black handkerchief. "Look, an old rag retains its form longer than he who wore it. What an humbling and degrading thought that we shall one day resemble this."

---

[1] In the Buxton Forman version, the shirt-collar is said to be William's.

Lord Byron after pointing out the peculiar appearance of the fire at this period, when the body & skull which burnt fiercely gave to the flames a white silvery and wavy look of indescribable brightness and purity, then voted for trying the strength of those waves which had overpowered our friends and instantly stripping swam out in the precise direction in which the body had been washed on shore. Captain Shenley and myself followed him into the sea. After swimming about a mile from the shore Lord B. was seized with a violent sickness and Captain Shenley who was near shore with a cramp. Lord B. could not be induced to return declaring it was black bile and exercise necessary to take it off.

Shenley on my return took hold of my hair and I supported him to the shore.[1] After our return the shed close to which we were standing & as a shelter from the wind, caught fire, & being excessively dry, it burnt most furiously; at half past three nothing was left of the funeral pile except a quantity of blackish looking ashes, mingled with pieces of white and broken fragments of bones. I removed the fire and placing poles under the furnace immersed it in the sea; the only bone which was left perfect, that of the Jaw, I took, and then consigned the remainder to its coffin, screwed it down, and placed it in Lord Byron's carriage, who departed for Pisa as it was now too late to commence with the body of

---

[1] In the Buxton Forman version, Shenley is simply described as being "nearly drowned."

Mr. Shelley. Captain Shenley and myself with those employed returned to Via Reggio.[1]

16TH AUGUST 1822.

On the following morning at ten o'clock Mr. Shenley and myself with an officer from the Health Office and seamen from our Vessel proceeded in a boat down the little river of Via Reggio to the sea and pulled for about a mile along the coast towards Massa, then landed and arranged our preparations as on the day before; there was little alteration in the scene from the one I have described in which we found his shipwrecked comrade; the same view of the sea, the mountains nearer and being composed in great part of white marble, their summits were covered with a white dust which had the appearance of snow;[2] there was less wood & the Town near us; the spot on which the body was interred was noted by three small white sticks[3] stuck in the ground from low to high water mark. Having some doubts of the accuracy of such reed like pyramids, we commenced with a large body of sand to ascertain exactly the place it was an hour before we succeeded during which time Lord Byron arrived in his carriage with Mr. Leigh Hunt accompanied by mounted dragoons & foot soldiers. The latter we found necessary to keep off the people, men & women, who were flocking in crowds to witness so strange a ceremony and whose curiosity would have impeded the progress of our operations. Scarcely had we trenched two spades down,[4] when the lime which had been thrown on the body to destroy it, appeared. Its only effect however had been that of changing the colour of the flesh to blue. The corpse was now visible and a spade having struck the skull violently caused a general shudder and the men drew back.

The furnace being placed & surrounded by a quantity of wood the remains were gradually removed from their shallow resting place. They were much decomposed & destroyed like the other, through long continuance in the sea. Mr. Keats's volume of poems[1] which had been buried with him, was destroyed with the exception of the leather binding. Lord Byron wished the skull to be preserved, but it almost instantly fell to pieces. Although we made a most tremendous fire the body burnt very slow; three hours elapsed before it separated and then fell open across the breast. It is a curious circumstance that the heart, which was unusually large, together with some other vessels in that quarter seemed almost proof against fire, for it was still entire in figure and apparently in substance, though the intensity of heat was so great that harder substances were reduced to white dust.

---

[1] In the Buxton Forman version, Byron and Hunt are described as returning in the carriage to Pisa.

[2] In the Buxton Forman text, this description is applied to the scene on the previous day.

[3] In the Buxton Forman text, "reeds" appears for sticks.

[4] The account is more confused in this portion of the Buxton Forman version. Apparently, the men dug first at right angles to and then parallel with the sea-line. See Buxton Forman, p. 11.

The same rites were performed with the frankincense etc. as on the preceding day. After cooling the reliques together with the furnace in the sea, we then placed the remains in the box & shipped it on board the Schooner. There had been during the whole of the ceremony a solitary sea bird crossing and recrossing the funeral pile which was the only intruder that baffled the vigilance of our guards to keep off. Lord Byron and Mr. Hunt, Mr. Shenley and myself with the officers in attendance now slowly retraced our steps to the town; the two former starting for Pisa, and we on board the Bolivar for Leghorn.[2]

I thus fulfilled the last melancholy offices to the dead in compliance with the earnest entreaties of their families and in further compliance have made out a narrative of those melancholy facts, in which all their happiness has been lost with the wreck of those they loved.

With regard to myself, years had not cemented my friendship with Mr. Shelley; but we had been from the instant of our meeting on those free, open, and unguarded habits of intimacy, which daily elicited stronger proofs of its warmth and security than is to be met with in years of intercourse between the cold and heartless. He was a memorable example of how little the rarest talents, united to solid virtues are estimated, and how deeds emanating from the purest feelings of the heart may be so misrepresented as to make him calumniated & persecuted for what deserved unqualified approbation. Mr. Shelley was the only being I have ever known who was totally devoid of selfishness: his fortune and talents were at the free disposal of his friends,—his life had been one continued sacrifice of his own happiness to give happiness to others. He surpassed all other writers in originality and warmth of imagination and creative fancy, harmony of verse and what all that knew him will unhesitatingly pledge themselves for, that he never wrote, or promulgated an idea or word that did not flow from the finest inspiration of the heart.

---

[1] "The Poem of Lamia and Issabella"—Buxton Forman version. That version is rather fuller here than mine.

[2] The Buxton Forman text ends at this stage.

I had been long on the most intimate terms of friendship with Mr. Williams & was particularly attached to him from the singleness of his heart and innate worth & probity. He possessed, alike with Mr. Shelley that entire fearlessnes of consequences that no difficulty or danger however sudden or unforseen, could rob of self possession, and to this contempt of danger they fell sacrifices. My friend Williams had by concentrating the strength of his naturally powerful mind acquired a vigour and originality of conversation, which was very delightful contrasted with the wearying common place characters of society. He & Mr. Shelley ever since they had known each other in Italy, had been inseparable companions; their adoration of all Nature was unaffected and mutual, as were most of their feelings; their attachment to the sea was intense; and their want of nautical skill no impediment to the gratification of their wishes.

### THE MISSION TO ROME

The ashes, as the text mentions, were carried in an oaken box to Pisa in Byron's carriage. "We sang, we laughed, we shouted," wrote Hunt, in his *Autobiography*. "I even felt a gaiety the more shocking because it was real and a relief. What the coachman thought of us, God knows; but he helped to make up a ghastly trio. . . . I wish to have no such waking dream again. It was worthy of a German ballad." Byron himself, whom the ritual deeply affected, in spite of his usual efforts to hide his feelings, wrote to Tom Moore on August 27:

> We have been burning the bodies of Shelley and Williams on the sea shore, to render them fit for removal and regular interment. You can have no idea what an extraordinary effect such a funeral pile has, on a desolate shore, with mountains in the background and the sea before, and the singular appearance the salt and frankincense gave to the flame. All of Shelley was consumed except his heart, which would not take the flame, and is now preserved in spirits of wine.

Both Hunt and Medwin, who joined the party on the sea-shore, have luxuriated upon the scene in passages of their respective works, in marked contrast with Trelawny's business-like narrative, but I may round off the latter by citing a few sentences of Medwin's:

> As a foreground to this picture appeared as extraordinary a group, Lord Byron and Trelawny were seen standing over the burning pile, with some of the soldiers on the guard; and Leigh Hunt, whose feelings and nerves could not carry him through the scene of horror, lying back in the carriage,—the four post-horses ready to drop with the intensity of the noonday sun. The stillness of all around was yet more felt by the shrill scream of a solitary curlew, which, perhaps attracted by the body, whirled in such narrow circles round the pile, that it might have been struck with the hand, and was so fearless that it could not be driven away.[1]

---

[1] The "solitary sea-bird," it will be observed, has here had its genus defined as a shrilly screaming curlew. In a letter to William Rossetti, written three years before his death in 1881, Trelawny added a supplementary account to those already mentioned: "In the noonday heat in southern climes, all living things but the human seek the shade; in August when Shelley was burnt, the only exception to this was a solitary sea-gull attracted by the burning flesh, he hovered

In 1878 Trelawny wrote to Rossetti that when he threw the incense, wine and oil on the pile, he uttered incantation, saying: "I restore to nature through fire the elements of which this man was composed, earth, air, and water, everything is changed, but not annihilated; he is now a portion of that which he worshipped." These few words of ceremonial which impressed even Byron [1] seem to me to show a real genius for fitness to the occasion and of insight into the genius of Shelley.

Trelawny spent that autumn commanding the "Bolivar" in great dejection of spirits. In September, he put into Spezia once more in a heavy gale and wrote a poignant letter to Claire on board:

> This place fills me with gloomy and desponding thoughts —eight months back when I first entered this then enchanting bay—my bosom expanded with rapture—and here methought I could sit me down content—had I but some dear Friend to share my solitude—I induced Shelley to reside here —and I designed [2] the treacherous bark which proved his

a long time above the fire screaming to scare us and satisfy his appetite; he descended occasionally within thirty feet of the fire." The curlew too, then, has "suffered a sea-change", it has been ditualistically metamorphosed, to form a decorative motif to the scene, into a sea-gull, with, as Buxton Forman truly says, a "ghastly unappeased appetite for roast poet." Under Medwin's wand of verse its Thetis-like transformations went one better by becoming a "sea-mew." In Trelawny's other accounts its career opens as a curlew, passes into the sea-gull stage and reverts back to curlewhood. Still Buxton Forman professes to believe in it as stoutly as in the *frumious* raven of the *Younger Son.* As a naturalist with some experience of the avian identifications advanced by men of letters, I conclude that the only way of fixing the genus of this winged ministrant to the dread scene is to write down on separate pieces of paper the cabalistic terms—*Laridæ, Scollopacidæ, Sterninæ* and *Stercorariinæ*—put them in a hat and draw the winning number. Otherwise, one might imagine that the fiery heats of the day and the pyre had got into the heads of the celebrants.

[1] Trelawny told Mathilde Blind that Byron clapped him on the shoulder, saying, "Why, Trelawny, I knew you were a pagan, but not that you were a pagan priest! You do it very well!"

[2] See p. 154.

coffin—well it is selfish to regret that he has at last found peace—but it is sorrowful to think so noble and worthy a being—so deserving of all joy on earth could only attain it under the blue wave of the sea he loved—in her fated embraces was he obliged to fly for refuge and shelter from the wrongs and contumelies of a blind remorseless and ill judging world—let us hope he has now found his deserts and that his pure and ardent spirit has realised its fondest imaginings in some better state of existence—would we were with him. . . .

There he went on shore, visited the Casa Magni and found "sleeping still on the mud floor" with broken oars and mast Shelley's little skiff, the "boat on the Serchio." Early in October, he set sail for Genoa, where he resided until the January of 1823, when he set forth with Captain Roberts on an expedition to the Maremma where he lived in a cattle hut on the marshes whose loneliness and desolation were a rest to his bereaved heart. From Piombino, by way of Elba, Corsica, back along the Maremma and up the Tiber, by boat, he reached Rome at the end of February, where he paid the last rites to the spirit, the ashes of whose earthly tenement were joined nearly sixty years later by his own. It was while he was in Rome that he received Byron's invitation to accompany him to Greece.

When the celebrants arrived at Leghorn after the cremation at Viareggio, Trelawny had sent the ashes of Shelley to the English consul at Rome, Mr. Freeborn, who had, to soothe the authorities, been obliged to inter them in the Protestant cemetery which Trelawny had purchased to that end. It was a recess under an old pyramid, once the tomb of Caius Cestius, and enclosed by the old Roman wall. When Trelawny arrived in Rome, he built two tombs in the recess, one for Shelley's ashes and one for his own. On April 27th, he wrote to Mary:

> I have just planted six[1] young cypresses and four laurels, in front of the recess you see by the drawing is formed by two projecting parts of the old ruin. My own stone, a plain slab till I can decide on some fitting inscription, is placed on the left hand. I have likewise dug my grave, so that, when I die, there is only to lift up my coverlet and roll me into it. You may lie on the other side, if you like. It is a lovely spot.

The oaken box was covered with solid stone, inscribed with Leigh Hunt's Latin epitaph:

> Percy Bysshe Shelley, Anglus, oram Etruscam legens in navigiolo inter Ligurnum portum et Viam Regiam, procella periit viii. Non. Jul. MDCCCXXII. Aetat Suae. XXX.

To this Trelawny added the lines from the *Tempest*:

> Nothing of him that doth fade,
> But doth suffer a sea change
> Into something rich and strange.

In 1878, he gave Rossetti two cypress cones from one of these trees, all that were left of the cones he had already planted in his country garden at Usk.

---

[1] In the *Recollections* he says there were eight of them and that when he saw them again in 1844, seven remained and were 35 feet high.

# CHAPTER IV

## *THE POET'S WIFE*

*This above all: to thine own self be true.*

### § 1

### A FRIENDSHIP OF INCOMPATIBLES

LET us begin by tracing the course of a singular friendship between the wife and the apostle of Shelley, between the sentimentalist and this man of fire and follies, between the introvert and the man of action, between the lover and the loather of the social world, between a cold-hearted woman and a hot-blooded man, between one who never deeply loved at all and another who loved too often, between the conformist and the reformer, the over-nice and the elemental, the Laodicean and the whole-hogger, the early Victorian and the late Elizabethan, the worldly-minded and the savage, the self-analyst and Don Impetuoso, the fearful and the fearless one, the woman who wrote novels and the man who acted them, the intellectual and the natural, the salon and the camp. They did have some shareables, for they were both expansive enough, and Mary was a born romanticist, Trelawny one in his (frequently) bad moments. One married and loved Shelley so far as she was capable of loving anybody outside her image of herself, and the other adored him.

This was the real and indeed the only bond between them,[1] for Shelley is the index to Trelawny's whole life, and that is the key to it all. Otherwise theirs was an alliance of accidental contact, circumstantial binding rather than of natural affinity of spirit, and, therefore, it is its tenacity that surprises one rather than its taking-off. But it must be remembered that Mary and Trelawny actually saw very little of each other between 1822 and 1837, for Trelawny was only in England in 1828, 1832 and 1835–7, when the friendship was broken, and in England he certainly did not spend a great deal of his time in her company. It was a friendship that Shelley's own radiance encircled with its beams, and when that was quenched, it principally became a correspondence course. Shelley made it and Shelley broke it, for what estranged them more than any other known factors, was her refusal to write Shelley's life and to supply him with the materials for it, that and her tampering with the notes of *Queen Mab* in her edition of the poems.

---

[1] If we omit a mutual disesteem for Byron.

### HOW MARY SAW TRELAWNY

When Mary first met Trelawny early in 1822, she shot down a piquant description of him in that indefatigable *Journal* (Jan. 19) of hers:

> Trelawny is extravagant—*un giovane stravagante*—partly natural, and partly, perhaps, put on, but it suits him well, and if his abrupt but not unpolished manners be assumed, they are nevertheless in unison with his Moorish face (for he looks Oriental yet not Asiatic), his dark hair, his Herculean form;[1] and then there is an air of extreme good nature which pervades his whole countenance, especially when he smiles, which assures me that his heart is good. He tells strange stories of himself, horrific ones, so that they harrow

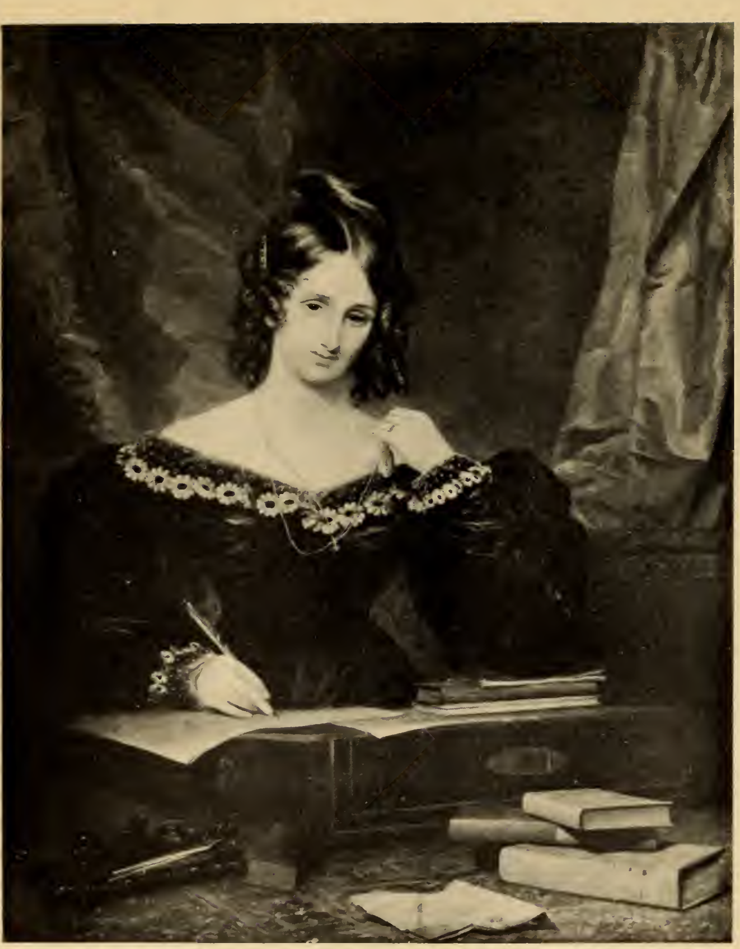
---

[1] Byron, Count D'Orsay and Trelawny were accounted the three handsomest men of their time.

> one up, while with his emphatic but unmodulated voice, his simple yet strong language, he pourtrays the most frightful situations; then all these adventures took place between the ages of 13 and 20. I believe them now I see the man, and, tired with the every day sleepiness of human intercourse, I am glad to meet with one who, among other valuable qualities, has the rare merit of interesting my imagination.

This slightly patronising sketch is revealing. She detected the Cornish ancestry with a slice of the Spanish hidalgo, but she saw only the stage-manager who dramatised his own temperament and physical appearance, the "Corsair" of literature in which part the Pirate in reality had a weakness for seeing himself, and good grounds for it too.

One of the interesting things about Trelawny is that he really was like the legendary figures of giants and demi-gods; the Condottieri; the chesty pioneers and picaros; the race of Samson, Ishmael, Hotspur, Ajax, Cellini, Alastor, Gil Blas, D'Artagnan, Robin Hood, even the sheikhs of a later date. He is for ever drifting over the frontier between reality and legend, so that the two are confounded and, like the bewildered dog, you do not quite know whether you have your teeth in the bone or its shadow. Watch a tree becalmed against a blue sky and it will appear like a painting on a screen. Endymion hardly knew whether he held in his arms the woman or the goddess. He who, in Sir Sidney Colvin's words, "weaved the story of his own wild life into a thrilling, inextricable, ultra-romantic blend of fact and fiction" was in actuality his own myth, and if he dressed fact up in fiction, he also adventured in his own proper person into the land of legend. He was the knight-errant of fact, of fiction and of his own vain fancy, so that you



MARY SHELLEY

FROM A PAINTING BY S. J. STAMP IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

often do not know where you are. What Mary saw was not the genuine romantic, for she was incapable of seeing him, she did not possess that quality of imagination whereto she calls our attention and which would have enabled her to perceive that dynamic, explosive, elemental force there was in him and in her own husband. What she saw was the theatrical Byronist and we may be sure that Trelawny played up with all his might to the limitations of her vision.

After knowing him three weeks, she jotted down a similar comment:

> A kind of half-Arab Englishman whose life has been as changeful as that of Anastasius, and who recounts the adventures of his youth as eloquently and well as the imagined Greek. . . . He is six feet high; raven-black hair, which curls thickly and shortly like a Moor's; dark-grey expressive eyes; overhanging brows; upturned lips, and a smile which expresses good nature and kind-heartedness. His shoulders are high like an Oriental's; his voice is monotonous, yet emphatic; and his language as he relates the events of his life, energetic and simple, whether the tale be one of blood and horror or irresistible comedy. His company is delightful, for he excites me to think, and if any evil shade the intercourse, that time will reveal—the sun will rise or night darken all.

Othello relates his accidents by flood and field to—it is a little difficult to fit the sophisticated Mary into the enraptured, surrendering, all-receptive mind of Desdemona. Yet Desdemona would have understood Trelawny better than the intellectual Mary, for to her crystal spirit he could not have appeared as other than his true self. The last sentence takes one with a jerk—"if any evil shade the intercourse." What evil, wonders the guileless reader? Was Mary afraid of the seductions of this histrionic bearer of strange tales? Or was that *au fond* correct, genteel little soul of hers as disquieted by this compelling personality as by her husband's refusal to confine his imagination to forest, cloud and mountain? Perhaps she would have liked to expurgate Trelawny as she did *Queen Mab?*

### MARY AND TRELAWNY IN ITALY

Such was Mary's description of Trelawny. Trelawny's first one of Mary occurs early in the *Recollections:*

> Presently he (Shelley) re-appeared with Mrs. Shelley. She brought us back from the ideal world Shelley had left us in, to the real one, welcomed me to Italy, and asked me the news of London and Paris, the new books, operas and bonnets, marriages, murders and other marvels. . . . The most striking feature in her face [she was twenty-seven, two years younger than Trelawny] was her calm, grey eyes; she was rather under the English standard of woman's height, very fair and light-haired, witty, social and animated in the society of friends, though mournful in solitude.

This is very slight, but it adumbrates one of her most marked characteristics—her love of society, and though she was too self-consciously cultured to be a downright snob, of good society. It is important to bear this in mind when reading her highly introspective *Journal,* with its interminable self-communings which have more than a suspicion of Narcissism. Mary was out of place as a feminine Amiel; she was the child not of literature but of literary society, and one of the reasons why her *Journal* fails to convince us is because she was writing it in a false relation to life.

Mary's part, first at Pisa and then Lerici between January and July, 1822, is quite subordinate in the interplay between Shelley, the Williamses and Trelawny, so vividly set forth in the *Recollections*. Her references to Trelawny in the *Journal* are casual but frequent. On February 14th, her entry runs: "I came one afternoon in high spirits with news concerning the building of the boat saying, 'Oh, we must all embark; all live aboard; we will all "suffer a sea change."' And dearest Shelley was delighted with the quotation, saying that he would have it for the motto for his boat." But the motto was for his grave, not for his boat.

It is difficult during this period to disengage a sharp outline of Mary either as an individual or in her relations with Trelawny. It was always the ineffectual angel who not only did all the talking but most of the practical business of the modest household as well. The references in the *Journal* to the "Ariel" are scanty and her attitude was rather one of tolerant detachment towards an occupation which was without doubt the happiest in Shelley's life, and did him, as she remarks, "a great deal of good." All through those early months of 1822, a constellation of friends was burning brightly until the falling of the luminary whence the others borrowed so much of their own lustre eclipsed them all. Alone among them Mary was out of her element. Edward and Jane Williams, Claire who joined the party at Pisa on April 15th, Byron in his gloomy palace, Trelawny and Shelley himself are all brilliantly defined. But Mary is obscured; she fails to carry conviction as a participant. It is odd how seldom the others mention her, and the explanation surely is, not that her personality failed to exert its due weight, but simply that it was withdrawn, acquiescent but not in active confluence.

### TRELAWNY'S SERVICES TO MARY

It is only after Shelley's death and in the extreme tension of the days immediately following it that Mary emerges as a separate identity. There are long records in her *Journal* from the time when Shelley left the Bay of Spezia to meet Hunt at Leghorn on July 1st to and beyond the day (July 11th) when she and Jane, more and more disquieted at the absence of news about the returning "Ariel," set out for Leghorn to find out what had happened. They failed to trace either Trelawny or Captain Roberts at Leghorn that same evening, but found the latter at the "Globe" inn the next morning. He "came down to us with a face that seemed to tell us that the worst was true." When they got in touch with Trelawny, he accompanied them back to Lerici. "On Thursday, the 18th, Trelawny left us to go to Leghorn to see what was doing or what could be done. On Friday I was very ill; but as evening came on, I said to Jane, 'if anything had been found on the coast, Trelawny would have returned to let us know. He has not returned, so I hope.' About 7 p. m., he did return: all was over; all was quiet now. They had been found washed on shore." Of that terrible journey, first to Pisa to see whether Byron and Hunt had heard any news, and then to Leghorn, Mary remarked to Maria Gisborne, "to tell you all the agony we endured during those twelve days would be to make you conceive a universe of pain—each moment intolerable, and giving place to one still worse."

At this period, Mary's writings are full of a warm and just appreciation of Trelawny's services to her. On September 10th, she wrote to Mrs. Gisborne:

> the friend to whom we are eternally indebted is Trelawny. . . . But after all these benefits, what I most thank him for is this. When on that night of agony, that Friday night, he returned to announce that hope was dead for us . . . he did not attempt to console me—that would have been too cruelly useless—but he launched forth into, as it were, an overflowing and eloquent praise of my divine Shelley, till I was almost happy that thus I was unhappy, to be fed by the praise of him, and to dwell on the eulogy that his loss thus drew from his friend.

There was nothing in fact that Trelawny left undone during those fatal days. His variety of energies—organising the search for the bodies, arranging the cremation, making smooth the way with the authorities, burning the sea's tragic load, adding the quotation from the *Tempest* to Hunt's inscription, and finally securing the Protestant cemetery at Rome and going in person there to plant the tomb with his famous cypresses—still left room for that delicate comfort, tact and sympathy for Mary which later accompanied her to Albaro, near Genoa, and finally supplied her with the means of leaving for England.

> "Nothing," she writes in her *Journal,* "could equal the zeal of Trelawny in carrying our wishes into effect. He was indefatigable in his exertions, and full of forethought and sagacity in his arrangements. It was a fearful task; he stood before us at last [Mary, of course, was not present at the cremation], his hands scorched and blistered by the flames of the funeral pyre, and by touching the burnt relics as he placed them in the receptacles prepared for the purpose. And there in compass of that small case, was gathered all that remained on earth of him whose genius and virtue were a crown of glory to the world."[1]

[1] See Appendix I.

Though she tags out her sorrow in much embroidery, Mary was at her best immediately after the death of Shelley, overbearing her dissonance with the living man in her recognition of the magnitude of his loss. The time was yet to come when her grief became stereotyped and mannered, and she fought hard to dramatise herself as the lorn widow of the poet she loved so disapprovingly in life and honoured so negatively in after years.

On September 10th, Mary also wrote to Mrs Gisborne:

> I have of course mentioned him [Trelawny] to you as one who wishes to be considered eccentric, but who was noble and generous at bottom. I always thought so even when no fact proved it, and Shelley agreed with me as he always did, or rather I with him. We heard people speak against him on account of his vagaries; we said to one another, "still we like him, we believe him to be good." Once, even, when a whim of his led him to treat me with something like impertinence, I forgave him, and I have now been well rewarded. In my outline of events you will see how, unasked, he returned with Jane and me from Leghorn to Lerici; how he stayed with us poor miserable creatures five days there, endeavouring to keep up our spirits; how he left us on Thursday, and, finding our misfortune confirmed, then without rest returned on Friday to us, and, again without rest, returned to Pisa on Saturday. These were no common services. Since then he has gone through by himself all the annoyances of dancing attendance on Consuls and Governors for permission to fulfil the last duties of those gone, and attending the ceremony himself; all the disagreeable part, and all the fatigue fell on him. As Hunt said, "He worked with the meanest and felt with the best." He is generous to a distressing degree.

When Mary arrived at Genoa that autumn, she wrote to Claire on September 15th: "I know that [intercourse with human beings] will bring nothing but unhappiness, if, indeed, I except Trelawny, who appears so truly generous and kind." It is plain from these passages that Mary never felt her way through to the real Trelawny. Generously as she acknowledged his generosities to her, one feels that she regarded them as something separate from his normal nature or self-expression of it. Even when melted by gratitude for his services, she still dwells upon her original impression of the rather attractive, rather dangerous buccaneer who might so easily take an ell if you gave him an inch. Even now she never quite lays aside the air of detached, slightly suspicious patronage entertainingly expressed in, "Still we like him, we believe him to be good." One can imagine Shelley solemnly balancing with her the credit and debit of Trelawny's "goodness." The governess in her could not quite determine whether the hawk would pounce or the dove would coo. Apart from her sentiments and fancies about him, her mind's eye was fixed upon him in relation to the valuations of others, those who "spoke against him on account of his vagaries."

Mrs. Marshall, writing of the Albaro period when Mary, Byron, La Guiccioli and the Hunt ménage made up so singular a fraternity, says:

> Among those of their former acquaintance who now surrounded Mary [Trelawny was living close by]—the one who by his presence ministered most to the needs of her fainting moral nature was Trelawny. His fresh vigorous personality, his bright originality and rugged independence, and his unbounded admiration for Shelley, made him wonderfully reviving to Mary; he had the effect on her of a gust of fresh air in a close crowded room. He was unconventional and outspoken, and by no means always complimentary, but he had

a just appreciation of Mary's mental and moral superiority to the people around her and a frank liking for herself.

If Mary herself could sometimes have forgotten her mental and moral superiority to the people around her, her friendship with Trelawny might never have been broken.

### THEIR LATER CORRESPONDENCE

The story of a friendship maintained for another fourteen years with revealing cross-currents and revulsions of feeling on Trelawny's part is carried on in his *Letters,* edited with insight and discrimination by Buxton Forman in 1910. For a long time, he never allowed himself to make up his mind about her. When he did, he wrote those disparaging passages about her both in the *Letters* and the *Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author* (1878) which the critics have denounced as unjust to her and an example of temperamental instability, disloyalty and sheer contrariness in him. The only way of vindicating either Mary or Trelawny is, first, to take up the narrative of their relations in the *Letters,* and, secondly, to examine whether the charges he makes against her have any basis of truth in her own actions.

Begin then with the *Letters,* but before launching upon their uncertainties, consider their antecedents. Mary, it is evident, had Trelawny planted in her sentimental landscape as the *giovane stravagante.* To her he was a highly coloured exotic drama whither her fancy stole out of the moral correctitudes that governed her life. Half pleased, half shocked at what she saw, the wild scenario, the heady atmosphere, the unruly events and passionate gestures, and stimulated by her very sense of being shocked, she enforced on Trelawny a costume-part to which his own weakness for singularity, his Gasconism and Byronism, the vanity of the adventurer, eagerly responded. Her flattery had something of the same effect on him as Byron's scorn. But of the true romantic, the apostle of her own husband, she had about as much perception as a hen of the robin singing among the rowan berries outside the poultry run. To this man, Mary's theatre-going and his supplying the play must have become more and more wearisome, and he must have had some idea that she ministered to the least vital part of him. But the man who so often lightened his scanty purse for her—the chosen of him who possessed his unfaltering worship—he owed her something which I think he paid until the disparity between the poet and his Laodicean wife became too clear to him. The *Letters* are interesting for these veiled psychological reactions but still more so because they are obliquely related to wilder issues—the eternal struggle between the usages of society and the emancipation of the human spirit. That Mary for all her "mental and moral superiority" represented the one and Trelawny for all his romanticism the other is, I think, the true reading of this conjunction of opposites in friendship.

In reply to a letter from Mary, dated November, 1822, and written while they were both in Genoa, Trelawny answers Mary's "esteem" and "gratitude" by: "Ruled by impulse, not by reason, I am satisfied you should like me upon my own terms—impulse. As to gratitude for uttering my thoughts of him I so loved and admired, it was a tribute that all who knew him have paid to his memory." Mary wholly failed to see that the problem with Trelawny was not his impulses, his natural virtue, but what he made of them. Early in January, 1823, he wrote to her from Piombino, describing his sailing trip among the islands, in the Maremma, to Elba and Corsica, and up the Tiber to Rome, where he paid the last offices to Shelley's grave. He offers her his full service and writes: "There is not one now living has so tender a friendship for you as I have." She replied on January 30th: "Indeed, I do believe, my dear Trelawny, that you are the best friend I have, and most truly would I rather apply to you in any difficulty than to any one else, for I know your heart and rely on it." She also tells him that she has money and that Byron has offered her more. After a further letter written from Rome in April, and detailing what he had done for Shelley's grave, he wrote to Claire in the same month that Mary was going to England in June and that he longed to give her money. On April 27th, he told Mary that the ashes were now interred, his own grave dug beside them, the cypresses planted, and the inscription cut:

> This quotation (the one from the *Tempest,* "Nothing of him that doth fade But doth suffer a sea change Into something rich and strange") by its double meaning, alludes both to the manner of his death and his genius, and I think the element on which his soul took wing, and the subtle essence of his being, mingled, may still retain him in some other shape. The waters may keep the dead, as the earth may, and fire and water. His passionate fondness might have been from some secret sympathy in their natures. Thence the fascination which so forcibly attracted him, without fear or caution, to trust an element almost all others hold in superstitious dread, and venture as cautiously on as they would in a lair of lions.

When Trelawny writes like this, he is talking to himself, not to Mary, for no man talks thus to a woman unless he loves her or she understands him.

He tells her he has compiled the famous epitaph for Keats and sent it to Severn, and then, coming directly to her: "Do not go to England, to encounter poverty and bitter retrospection. Stay in Italy. I will most gladly share my income with you, and if, under the same circumstances, you would do the same by me, why then you will not hesitate to accept it. I know of nothing would give me so much pleasure." Just before he sailed on the "Hercules" to Greece, he also wrote: "Will you tell me what sum you want as I am settling my affairs? . . . You are sure of me, so let us use no more words about it." He was soon to give himself that pleasure he sought, for Byron's cantankerous shiftiness of mood lost her his assistance: "He (Byron)," she wrote to Jane Williams from Albaro in July,

> has written notes and letters so full of contempt against me and my lost Shelley that I could stand it no longer and have refused to receive his still professed aid for my journey. This of course delays me. I can muster about £30 of my own. . . . I have written, therefore, to Trelawny for the sum requisite.

There may be more in Byron's refusal than meets the eye, for we must take leave to doubt Mary's word that he calumniated Shelley, the only man for whom he had any real respect. Byron said of Shelley after his death:

> He was the most gentle, the most amiable and least worldly-minded person I ever met; full of delicacy, disinterested beyond all other men, and possessing a degree of genius joined to simplicity as rare as it is admirable. He had formed to himself a *beau ideal* of all that is fine, high-minded and noble, and he acted up to this ideal even to the very letter.

Is it likely that Byron, within a year of Shelley's death, would have reversed this verdict? The real cause why Byron refused to help Mary was because Hunt told him he owed Mary £1000, and this so infuriated him that he washed his hands of her pecuniary troubles. One can imagine the soothing manner in which Hunt conveyed this information. And, in justice to Byron, it should be remembered how incumbent upon him it was to save every penny for the opening of his heroic Greek drama.

On July 25th, Mary left Genoa for England and five days later wrote to Jane from St. Jean de la Maurienne:

> It [a former letter] told you of the departure of Lord Byron and Trelawny for Greece, the former escaping with all his crowns (viz. some £10,000), and the other disbursing until he had hardly £10 left. It went to my heart to borrow the sum from him necessary to make up my journey, but he behaved with so much quiet generosity that one was almost glad to put him to that proof, and witness the excellence of his heart.

Long afterwards, Trelawny told Mr. Richard Edgcumbe: "How could any man do otherwise? It was but common humanity." If we add devotion to Shelley, the ultimate collapse of a friendship, which at one time almost beggared one party to it for the sake of the other, will be less surprising. I do not believe Trelawny ever really cared for Mary nor she for him, but circumstance elicited acts of generosity and professions of gratitude that had no correspondence with mutual affection. Such acts on his part dispose us to think that if he broke his bonds with her, there was other and good reason for it than the native changeability with which the critics charge him. As we shall see in a later chapter, Trelawny was the reverse of a weathercock.

On May 10th, Mary gave Trelawny her reason for leaving Italy—the education of young Percy, whom, encouraged by her husband's experience of public schools, she sent to Harrow "now in high reputation under a new headmaster." A gap in the correspondence follows, and when Trelawny writes again from the Lyceum theatre of war in Greece, he is well buskined: "From the listless being you knew me" he is transformed "to one of all energy and fire." His the "merit" of discovering the glorious Odysseus. "No more a nameless being, I am now a Greek chieftain." In one of her letters Mary describes herself as a "pure spirit of fire," so as she sat in the auditorium and he trod the footlights, their flashing spirits may be said to have met across them. A letter from Trelawny in August about Byron's death crossed one from Mary, dated July 28th from Kentish Town, where she was living with Jane Williams: "It is delightful to feel that absence does not diminish your affection, excellent, warm-hearted friend, remnant of our happy days, of my vagabond life in beloved Italy, our companion in prosperity, our comforter in sorrow." That, in contrast, is a flash of reality. She gave him news of Moore's projected life of Byron, his hearse passing her windows on its way up Highgate Hill, her pleasing literary acquaintances and prospects of an independent income of from £300 to £400 a year. Absence indeed could not diminish his affection for her, because it was the only agent to have kept it alive. Mary in England was rapidly shedding her Italian vagabondage, while Trelawny was more of the vagabond than ever.

They exchanged a number of letters while Trelawny was at Zante in 1826 and 1827. He wrote to her describing the Greek feuds, the desperate Greek fortunes and mentioning his "villainous law-suit" in the October of 1827. It lasted ten months, and was a very distasteful incident in his life, not because it is known what it was all about or whether he was in the right or the wrong of it,[1] but because for Trelawny to be dragged into any lawsuit was far more villainous than the suit itself could ever have been. Perhaps it was that, combined with fevers and loneliness, which made him "fancy I must now look like an old patriarch who has outlived his generation." A natural resilience from an aberration even so bad as this moved him to write to Mary when he returned to England on July 8th, 1828:

> Time has not quenched the fire of my nature; my feelings and passions burn fierce as ever, and will till they have consumed me. I wear the burnished livery of the sun. To whom am I a neighbour? and near whom? I dwell amongst tame and civilized human beings, with somewhat of the same feelings as we may guess the lion feels when, torn from his native wilderness, he is tortured into domestic intercourse with what Shakespeare calls "forkèd animals," the most abhorrent to his nature.

This is a perfect example of the actor impersonating for Mary's benefit the genuine living man. No doubt she got her thrill out of it. He wrote one short letter to Mary from his native home at Trewithen, Cornwall, in September, and then, six months later, occurs the first sign of erosion in a friendship which had hitherto resisted the elements because it had never been exposed to them.

---

[1] But see p. 285.

## THE BEGINNINGS OF DISUNION

On March 11th, 1829, Trelawny wrote to Mary from Florence that Landor and Charles Armitage Brown, the friend of Keats, were spurring him to write his own life.[1] He also wished to write the Life of Shelley as a tribute to his "great love" for the memory of his friend:

> I always wished you to do this, Mary; if you will not, as of the living I love him and you best, incompetent as I am, I must do my best to show him to the world as I found him. Do you approve of this? Will you aid in it? without which it cannot be done. Will you give documents? Will you write anecdotes? Or—be explicit in this, dear—give me your opinion; if you in the least dislike it, say so, and there is an end of it; if on the contrary, set about doing it without loss of time.

To this request Mary replied with a long-winded, obscure, insincere, equivocating refusal. She tells him she shrinks from publicity; then she shifts her ground to it being impossible "to write Shelley's life in that way." "Many men have his opinions,—none heartily and conscientiously act on them as he did,—it is his act that marks him." She then returns to herself: "to be in print, the subject of men's observations, of the bitter hard world's commentaries, to be attacked or defended, this ill becomes one . . . whose chief merit—if it be one—is a love of that privacy which no woman can emerge from without regret." What she really means by this fake modesty and inverted vanity is that she no longer cares to be publicly associated with heresy. "I hope one day," she proceeds, "to write Shelley's life, but it must not be published now. There are too many concerned to speak against him; it is still too sore a subject." She refuses, in other words, to vindicate her "divine Shelley" of the charges from which she professes to shield him by allowing them to remain. And she concludes by sanctioning Trelawny paying him a "tribute of praise," always provided that she is omitted from any mention. Mary, of course, never did write the biography she had promised Trelawny, and it is doubtful whether she ever had any real intention of so doing. The curiosity is that she ever married him, not that she refused to give the world material that only she possessed. The ideal husband for Mary would have been a dogmatic publicist of the type of Dean Inge—not a Shelley, no, nor half a Shelley.

---

[1] See chapter 1.

A letter so dishonest as this makes us understand why Trelawny, releasing a tiger of wrath, growled, "Mary is the most conventional slave I ever met," and why her own duplicity of character made her, in spite of her animation in society and much indulgence in it, an unhappy woman, though not the tragic figure she underlined in her *Journal*. Her letter is odious because it is twisty and yet self-satisfied, and she was unhappy because she would never face her own uneasy self.

She belonged indeed to the hapless tribe of mortals who live like ghosts between one world and another—Madam Facing-Both-Ways. By nature submissive to and doctrinaire on behalf of the common acceptances, she was by the accident of birth and marriage swept into the great movement of revolt whereof her father was the crabbed priestly lawgiver and her husband the inspiration. She gave an unqualified adhesion neither to the Left nor to the Right, and so found herself a castaway from both. The hypocrisy of her letter excites contempt, but the self-entanglement of which it was the symptom excites pity. If Mary had not written her *Journal* in which she relieves us of pity for her by pouring interminable bucketsful upon herself, she would fit precisely into a review I read last year of Mr. Cunninghame Graham's *Thirty Tales and Sketches*.

> His (Mr. Graham's) sympathy, [wrote the *Manchester Guardian* reviewer], goes out to all simple souls, his wrath is for the civilized and their conventions; but he can respect conventions even, when they are hardened into character. . . . So of the peasantry, or, for an instance, the fisher-folk of Eastern Scotland—how wonderfully Mr. Graham bares their souls! The cramping belief, the rigorous morality, does not disturb him, for he sees it as organic with their life like wind and sea. But woe to those who wear their conventions uncertainly, woe to hypocrisy and complacence and self-deception! No one can love them, it is true; and yet it is possible to hate them too impatiently; for they belong with the backwash of progress. . . . He makes us long to improve ourselves, and these horrible deformities appear upon us when we have failed!

The story of Mary Shelley's life is compassed in those words, and Trelawny's attachment to her, one of loyalty to another rather than personal sentiment for herself, was gnawed away by progressive disillusionment, slowed down by his long absences from her and hastened towards the end by her estrangement from the things that Shelley stood for. He wrote an angry reply (now lost) to her prevarications, and Mary's response to it of December 15th, 1829, sank her deeper into a treacherous soil:

> Wherefore write fiction? and the truth, any part of it, is hardly for the rude cold world to handle. His merits are acknowledged, his virtues;—to bring forward actions which,

right or wrong (and that would be a matter of dispute), were in their results tremendous, would be to awaken calumnies and give his enemies a voice.

It is a voice spoken from the midst of that "rude cold world" which was essential clothing to her, if a hair-shirt for her husband. Her evasiveness of statement reflects the dualism from within. If she had been sincerely opposed to the publication of the life of a poet who had, according to Trelawny, but four friends in the world at the time of his death, why did she engage herself to write it? Whatever her reasons, and it is to be feared they were partly jealousy of Emilia Viviani and Jane Williams and partly dislike of Shelley's political heterodoxy and religious atheism, there can be little doubt that the reason she actually gives is not the true one. The *D.N.B.* says that if she had written the Life, she would have lost her allowance from Sir Timothy Shelley, and Trelawny himself wrote to Claire: "Sir Tim's family and her son are worldly reasons for her perhaps remaining quiet on the subject." But there is more to it than that, nor does such a motive for inaction explain why she refused material to Trelawny.

### THE RIFT WIDENS

There is little doubt that Trelawny's letter to Claire, written from Ancona four months after this incident, is a reflection of his opinion of Mary's attitude:

> Mary has written me a letter which I have just received,—with a good deal of mawkish cant—as to her love of retirement—opinion of the world—and a deal of namby-pamby stuff—as different from her real character and sentiments as Hell is from Helicon. But she has been so long accustomed to a false and inflated style of novel-writing,—that separating

> the dross from the gold, what is there, even in her best, *The Last Man,* but the title of it? The subject is indeed first rate; but then so little has she done towards it that I look upon it as a thing yet to be done—nothing but words jangling against each other—but never in tune or in their places—like, as Shelley would say or think, a hurricane in petticoats, —don't be angry at this opinion of mine—but I have been trying to read her *Last Man*—and see how out of humour it has made me.

It is interesting that she still remains high in his esteem, as though he would not allow himself to think of Shelley's wife as such worlds apart from Shelley.

On August 16th, 1830, he wrote to tell Mary he had finished the first part of "my history," which he insisted was to be anonymous. On October 25th, he asks her to read the MS. attentively and then show it to Murray or Colburn, the publishers. "I am very anxious that no alterations or omissions should be made."

Mary's reply, of December 22nd, after telling him that his work was "full of passion, energy and novelty," goes on:

> but, my dear friend, allow me to persuade you to permit certain omissions. In one of your letters to me you say that "there is nothing in it that a woman could not read." You are correct for the most part, and yet without the omission of a few words here and there . . . I am sure that yours will be a book interdicted to women. . . . I have named all the objectionable passages and I beseech you to let me deal with them as I would with Lord Byron's *Don Juan* when I omitted all that hurt my taste. . . . I, your partial friend, strongly object to coarseness, now wholly out of date, and beg you for my sake to make the omissions necessary for your obtaining feminine readers.

Who could have imagined that the lip-pursed writer of this letter was the widow of the author of the *Cenci?* Let the publishers decide the expurgations, replies Trelawny (Florence, January 19th, 1831) without prompting from her:

> My life, though I have sent it you, as the dearest friend I have, is not written for the amusement of women; it is not a novel. If you begin clipping the wings of my true story, if you begin erasing words, you must then omit sentences, then chapters; it will be pruning an Indian jungle down to a clipped French garden.[1]

Mary must be given the benefit of the doubt as to whether she did prompt the publishers. Her own words, written on March 22nd, 1831, are:

> After all, I have done no more than send your MSS. to Colburn, and I am still in expectation of his answer. In the first place, they insist on certain parts being expunged—parts of which I alone had the courage to speak to you, but which had before been remarked upon as inadmissible.

Mary's indefiniteness of statement makes the extraction of the truth almost too baffling. The negotiations between Mary, Trelawny and the publishers have already been referred to in the first chapter. But this issue of Mary's censorship, coupled with that bitter dissension between them over the expurgations of *Queen Mab* in her edition of Shelley's Poems, snapped one more link in the chain of memories and associations that bound them together. "If compelled to speak of her (Mary)," he wrote to Claire after this episode, "I shall speak according to her deserts, but not unjustly or in anger." The conflict between them in this affair revealed a fundamental division.

---

[1] See Chapter I for further details upon the correspondence between Mary and Trelawny on the subject of *The Adventures of a Younger Son,* and in special reference to this letter.

## THE FRIENDSHIP DIES A NATURAL DEATH

Mrs. Marshall speaks of the "dogged vitality" of a friendship which weathered obstacles, misunderstandings, wide temperamental differences and divergences in habits, morals and opinions. Her explanation of its final shipwreck was that the wind of Trelawny's affections went round from west to east. Mary had borne with his exactions and scoldings and humours with full faith in his loyal and generous heart. She had put up with his lawless ways; she had worked for him like a slave and only withstood him when he was wrong. But his Greek fevers (thrown off, by the way, nine years before he and Mary went their opposite ways), the wound that told on his health and disposition (also overcome by his magnificent constitution), his combativeness and distrust of authority, joined hands with age and time to disintegrate his feelings. Mrs. Marshall, of course, writes as a Maryolater, and the objections to her summing-up are not only that it is one-sided—if Mary put up with his lawlessness, he put up equally with her niceties, correctitudes and self-righteousness masquerading as self-effacement—but that neither he nor she had any very deep feelings to be disintegrated. And it is a verdict that completely misses Trelawny, the strength of whose feelings is the key to his character.

He really did his bit, the unprincipled Pirate whose relation with her was one of principle; the man of impulse who on the whole was very forbearing to her—and Mary had an ingenious way of putting any disputant with her in the wrong and then turning on the tap of the long-suffering victim. On March 25th, 1831, she wrote to him:

> You know of course that Elizabeth St. Aubyn is married, so that you know your ladies desert you sadly. If Claire and I were either to die or marry, you would be left without a Dulcinea at all, with the exception of the six score new objects for idolatry you may have found among the pretty girls in Florence.

To this Trelawny replied a fortnight later by agreeing to the disputed omissions with a good grace, and ending, "do not you, dear Mary, abandon me by following the evil example of my other ladies. I should not wonder if fate, without our choice, united us; and who can control his fate?"[1] It was not fate but the deep autumnal tone of those mighty harmonies both had heard in their dayspring which still kept them together.

In July, 1832, Mary took Trelawny's daughter, Zella, for a month, and in 1833 Trelawny was in America. He wrote to her from Brighton on September 12th, 1835: "Six days I rest and do all I have to do on the seventh, because it is forbidden," a squiblet which shows, I think, that he was beginning to know his Mary pretty well. On November 30th, he wrote to Claire: "Her [Mary's] disease grows upon her with years—I mean her pining after distinction and the distinguished of fortune." This is by no means a gust of anger, for he pays a tribute to Mary's "fine intellect" in the same letter; it is merely a sign that his playful humour with her concealed behind it that same insight which was capable of very sharp and faithful observation. On March 23rd of the following year, he wrote to Claire: "Oh, you want to know about Mary—I was at a party with her last night—or rather met her there—she lights up very well at night—and shows to advantage in society—for there she is happy—detesting solitude—in the country she does nothing but complain." How casual, how tolerant in a way this reference is! Mary has already become for him a woman one rubs shoulders with at a party. There is no wrath nor contempt nor even sadness. The principle that bound them was broken when Trelawny saw her no longer with the shade of Shelley towering over her. It was Mary who left it because it shut out the sun, her sun, and when Trelawny perceived this, she became for him a figure in a crowd.

---

[1] A phrase that was constantly in Trelawny's mouth. It was the tragedy of his life that he did largely fail to make his own fate.

On February 10th, 1837, the year when the correspondence between them ceased, he wrote again to Claire: "Mary says liberty is the curse of her life—she languishes for the delights of slavery." That was the end of Mary for Trelawny, for if she forgot that she had once put her hand into Shelley's, he never did from the beginning until the end. Trelawny's last (extant) letter to Mary, written on September 25th, 1836, is gossipy, newsy, friendly, and in it he quotes Mrs. Norton's view of her, and adds his own: "You have a soul, and sense, and a deep feeling for your sex." Mary's last letter to Trelawny (January 27th, 1837), after a wailful prelude as to how hagridden she is by fortune, continues:

> You are a man at a feast, champagne and comfits your diet, and you naturally scoff at me and my dry crust in a corner. Often have you scoffed and sneered at all the aliment of kindness and society that fate has afforded me. I have been silent, for the hungry cannot be dainty, but it is useless to tell a pampered man this.

She then writes: "If you are still so rich, and can lend me £20 till my quarter, I shall be glad." It is not perhaps the most propitiatory method of securing a loan to abuse the sybaritism of the potential lender, especially when that lender has emptied his purse in former days for the eater of crusts, dry crusts, and crusts in a corner. And I think it serves to show that some readjustment is necessary in our view of the two characters hitherto presented to the world, the one as the persecuted heroine and the other as the false friend who rained the furies of his ungovernable changeability upon her devoted head. In personal animus at any rate, it is Mary who so far as we know has the last word, while the point of Trelawny's references to her in 1837 is that they are objective, impersonal, coolly critical in precisely the same way as is his portrait of Byron in the *Recollections*. That they are so detached is further evidence that Trelawny's friendship for Mary was not derived from that instinctive human kinship which is the true binder of persons and makes detachment when the live bonds are broken an impossibility. Once her union with Shelley lost its mystical significance for him by her own default, she vanished from the ken of his affections.

### A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE

Critics have been baffled by the discontinuance of the long friendship between Mary and Trelawny, for which, with the doubtful exception of Buxton Forman, who was finally won over to reproof by Mrs. Julian Marshall's *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, in unanimous voice they blame Trelawny. What seems to me much more surprising is that such a friendship should ever have lasted beyond the break-up of the

Pisan circle. That it should have persisted to at least as late as 1837, more than fifteen years from the first meeting of characters so disharmonious, is even stranger than Trelawny's obviously lukewarm offer of marriage to Mary, an offer so promptly rejected.

Trelawny's letter to Mary in 1831 suggesting their marriage (he was in Florence at the time) is not extant, but she replied to him that her name "would never be Trelawny," and in a letter about the forthcoming publication of *The Adventures of a Younger Son,* written on June 14th of that same year, she declared:

> You tell me not to marry—but I will,—any one who will take me out of my present desolate and uncomfortable position. Any one—and with all this do you think that I shall marry? Never,—neither you nor anybody else. Mary Shelley shall be written on my tomb—and why? I cannot tell, except that it is so pretty a name that though I were to preach to myself for years, I never should have the heart to get rid of it.

As will appear later, this is a piece of engaging humbug. Trelawny replied with spirit: "I was more delighted with your resolve not to change your name than with any other portion of your letter." He was, says Mr. Edward Garnett, half piqued and half relieved by Mary's refusal, but though marriages are extremely common between people who have less in common than the bitterest enemies, I find it impossible to believe that Trelawny seriously meant what he said. His triple experience of marriage at that time was not prepossessing, and though he wrote, "at the very sight of harness (particularly double) I plunge with fury and scream with horror," not very long before he married for the fourth time, he needed a stronger urge than an over-zealous loyalty to friendship to trim his roving course to Mary's measure.

Until he became thoroughly disillusioned about her, as about so many other things in this world of dust and disappointment, Trelawny behaved with great consideration and generosity to Mary, mainly I believe in honour of Shelley. That he was ever in love with her is certainly untrue, and perhaps his warmest expression of feeling occurs in a letter he wrote from Zante in the Ionian Isles on May 6th, 1826, when he was convalescing from his wounds in Greece:

> You know, Mary, that I always loved you impetuously and sincerely, and time proves its durability; we are both somewhat self-willed and gross-grained, and choose to love in our own fashions; but still where is there a truer friendship than that which cements Mary Shelley and Edward Trelawny? If I lose you, I should be poor indeed.

This is no love-letter and totally different in tone from the letters to Claire Clairmont, with whom he was after and perhaps before the death of Shelley, passionately in love. Sheer Quixotry was, I think, at the back of his offer to Mary, reinforced by weariness of his life at Florence (as he says, and he reappeared in England in 1832), disgust at "the petty vexations of what is called civilized life and . . . the Austrian tyrants trampling on their helot Italians," and perhaps the delusion that marriage with Mary might have restored something of the flavour of the lost Pisan days and together they might have written that Life of Shelley he both desired to write himself and was constantly urging her to fulfil. Or he might quite well have in an access of warmth dashed off an idea that buzzed inconsequently into his head and would not let him alone until he had put it to paper.

## § II

### TRELAWNY'S CHARGES AGAINST MARY

And now, what was it that Trelawny did say about her in the Appendix to the *Records of Shelley, Byron, and the Author* (1878)?

> Mrs. Shelley was of a soft, lymphatic temperament, the exact opposite to Shelley in everything; she was moping and miserable when alone, and yearning for society. Her capacity can be judged by the novels she wrote after Shelley's death, more than ordinarily commonplace [one would rather say pretentious than commonplace] and conventional. Whilst overshadowed by Shelley's greatness her faculties expanded; but when she had lost him they shrank into their natural littleness. We never know the value of anything until we have lost it, and can't replace it. The memory of how often she had irritated and vexed him tormented her after existence, and she endeavoured by rhapsodies of panegyric to compensate for the past. . . . It would be difficult to find minds more opposite than Shelley's and his wife's; but the tragical end of his first wife was ever present in his mind, and he was prepared to endure the utmost malice of fortune. Mrs. Shelley seldom omitted to avail herself of any opportunities (which were rare) to attend Church service, partly to show that she did not participate in her husband's views of atheism; and she was present when Dr. Nott preached in a private room in the basement story of the house in Pisa she and Shelley were living in. Godwin her father had no means of providing for her; and he educated her for a teacher or governess in a perfectly orthodox manner, which he knew was indispensable; and carefully withheld his own particular views and her mother's, as he knew they would be a bar to her success. Mrs. Shelley was a firm believer, and had little or no sympathy with any of her husband's theories; she

could not but admire the great capacity and learning of her husband, but she had no faith in his views, and she grieved that he was so stubborn and inflexible. Fighting with the world was "Quixotic." Her mother, father, and Shelley were martyrs to their opinions, and their great abilities resulted in failures and unhappiness. Mrs. Shelley did not worry herself with things established that could not be altered, but went with the stream. She was weak, and had no strength to go against it, and even the strong were swept away.

You may call this a stiff breeze, but not a mighty rushing wind. As for the criticism that Trelawny was writing unchivalrously about a poor defenceless woman, it is Victorian humbug. Mary had been dead twenty-seven years (she died in 1851) when he wrote this passage and while she was alive surely he could say what he chose about her in letters which were never intended for publication. And why should Mary be handed down the years in cotton-wool, with a label marked "fragile and stainless"? The biographer is not a horticulturist protecting sensitive plants whose lack of spiritual stamina prevents them from standing on their own roots. It was a misfortune for a woman like Mary to have married one of the five greatest poets in the language, but, having done so, she must stand the racket of truth with other men and other women who are either distinguished or have distinction thrust upon them. History is a Downland trackway, not cover for the furtive, and the only pertinent comment on Trelawny's verdict is whether it is true or not.

### HOW FAR WERE THEY TRUE?

Mr. Edward Garnett, who has written the best short monograph on Trelawny, complains of his instability in his relations with Mary. That charge cannot be sustained, if the view that I have suggested is tenable, namely that natural human gravitation was not concerned or only faintly concerned in the friendship between two such opposites. For Trelawny Mary was the dedicated bearer of the sacred phial that held some drops from the fount of Arethusa, and when she spilt them she forfeited all. As a matter of fact, his allusions to her in other quarters of his writings are remarkably consistent with his summary in the Appendix to the *Records*. Rossetti (William) said in 1882: "He did not greatly like Mrs. Shelley, thinking her too eager to stand well with society, and, as regards her husband, too fractious and plaguey." Trelawny's statement elsewhere in the *Records* that "she used every effort to make Shelley conventional and to get him to do as others did," is paralleled by the passages in the *Letters*, and in the Conversations with William Rossetti and Mr. Richard Edgcumbe, all cropping up at different dates. Nor is it surely mere coincidence that a writer so ill affected to Trelawny as Mr. Nicolson should have emphatically endorsed his estimate of Mary. She disliked being seen in public with Shelley, he says, because his clothes made people stare; she disliked him bathing at Lerici, because the absence of clothes made people stare still more, and it was Byron's knowledge of these and other littlenesses of external observance that made him despise her worldliness.

Trelawny, again, told Edgcumbe that "Mary was good but narrow-minded and jealous," and denied that she ever had any real occasion for jealousy. What Shelley wrote in *Epipsychidion*—

> An idealized version of my life and feelings. I think one is always in love with something or other; the error, and I con-

> fess it is not easy for spirits cased in flesh and blood to avoid it, consists in seeking in a mortal image the likeness of what is, perhaps, eternal.

—was, he declared, a truth beyond Mary's understanding. If Trelawny had been unjust to Mary, Shelley need never have written those tragic lines from *Julian and Maddalo*:

> Where is the beauty, love and truth we seek,
> But in our mind?

As later instances will show, it is fantastic to assume he ever found them in Mary, and it is possible that his failure to find them in her was at least a part cause why on more than one occasion after his marriage he sought death. To swing disquietedly within the orbits of Emilia and Jane was his own reluctant admission that in Mary was no abiding place for his spirit.

### EXPURGATING "QUEEN MAB"

In June, 1878, Richard Garnett wrote a review of the *Records* in the *Fortnightly Review* under the title of "Shelley's Last Days." As a witness in Mary's defence, he was worth two for the other side. Trelawny, he says, had exchanged the peevishness of age for the frankness of youth, whereas his criticisms of Mary open out as early as 1831. His charge as to Mary's orthodoxy was "calculated to excite inextinguishable hilarity." And pray why? Presumably because, as he says, the expurgations from Mary's 1839 edition of *Queen Mab* were restored in the second edition of the same year. To this Trelawny wrote a reply in the *Athenæum* of August 3rd, 1878. Garnett states, as a proof of Mary's tolerance he says, that she restored the notes to *Queen Mab*:

> She had other reasons to do so besides her toleration. I was at breakfast at Sir William Molesworth's at Pencarrow. . . . I said, "I have heard the publisher of Shelley's works is about to issue a new edition with a portion of Shelley's notes to *Queen Mab* omitted. Is there any crime equal to that? You cannot but agree that tampering with the text or mutilating an edition of any author's works is a crime that deserves capital punishment."

The company agreed and asked Trelawny to write to Moxon, the publisher. The letter was written, Molesworth and Trelawny being signatories to it, though only Trelawny's name appears in the text of the letter as printed in Buxton's Forman's edition of the *Letters*. Trelawny then met Moxon, who told him that the expurgations were not his fault, as pressure had been put upon him. It is probable, concludes Trelawny, that Moxon showed this letter to Mary who thereupon agreed to the restoration of the excised notes. It is hardly credible that Trelawny could have bowdlerised this story, when the letter itself is in existence, and some of the company present at the breakfast (he names them) must have been alive when his account appeared in the *Athenœum*. But even if it were a fabrication from beginning to end, it is a singular apology of Garnett's which excuses such personal disloyalty and literary prejudice on the ground that Mary subsequently repented of them.

Garnett then takes up Trelawny's statement that Mary did not understand Shelley. Was it surprising, he asks, that she should have been "incapable of appreciating the visionary and imaginative passages of a new apocalypse in poetry?" Maybe not, but these are bizarre words from the pen of an advocate rescuing

Mary from the charge of blindness of vision. He goes serenely on, however, to point out that Shelley expressed this disappointment in the "Prelude" to the *Witch of Atlas,* and to quote his letter:

> I only feel the want of those who can understand me. Whether from proximity and the continuity of domestic intercourse, Mary does not. . . . It is the curse of Tantalus that a person possessing such excellent powers and so pure a mind as hers should not excite the sympathy indispensable to their application to domestic life.

This, writes Garnett, is nothing more than "an ordinary passage in the experience of sensitive persons." Hell is hardly less Stygian for being a *cliché*. He concluded by citing Mary's words: "not making my Shelley as happy as he deserved to be. I will at least make him happy where he is now." That was a rich consolation for Shelley in the fields of immortality. The whole of Garnett's defence affords corroboration to Trelawny's Appendix.

### MARY AT CHURCH

One statement in it mentions her attendance at Dr. Nott's Church services in the basement of Shelley's house at Pisa. Dowden in his *Life of Shelley* no more than abbreviates Mrs. Marshall's account, so we will go straight to the fountain head whose waters are not likely to neglect their purificatory properties on behalf of the memory of Mary. On Sunday, March 3rd, 1822, Mary wrote: "A note to and visit from Dr. Nott." Mrs. Marshall's comment is: "Mary's experiments in the way of church-going, so new a thing in her experience and so little in accordance with Shelley's habits of thought and action, excited some surprise and comment. Hogg . . . was especially shocked," and Mrs. Gisborne wrote and told Mary so. Mary's reply, written on March 7th, is as follows:

> So Hogg is shocked that, for good neighbourhood's sake, I visited the *piano di sotto* [services on the ground floor of the Tre Palazzi]; let him reassure himself, since instead of a weekly it was only a monthly visit; in fact, after going three times, I stayed away until I heard he was going away. He preached against atheism, and, they said, against Shelley. As he invited me himself to come, this appeared to me very impertinent, so I wrote to him, to ask him whether he intended any personal allusion, but he denied the charge most entire. This affair as you may guess among the English at Pisa made a great noise; the gossip here of course is out of all bounds, and some people have given them something to talk about. I have seen little of it all, but that which I have seen makes me long most eagerly for some sea-girt isle where with Shelley, my babe, and books and horses, we may give the rest to the winds.

That is Mary to the life. It is she who is the insulted and injured, and so she longs to escape from all cruel aspersions to some sea-girt isle whither there was not the faintest chance of her going and which she would have loathed if she had ever gone there. But the other side of the picture is suppressed. This was the woman who had given her heart to, and lived with, the outcast hounded out of England by the Dr. Notts of his native land, the hunted quarry who wrote, "I can only print my writings by stinting myself in food," and to whom the *Gentlemen's Magazine* referred to as "this Tyro of the Juan schools, that preeminent academy of Infidels, Blasphemers, Seducers and Wantons." Hunt, who did not think Shelley's poetry good enough for the *Examiner,* wrote of his natural piety "towards nature, towards his friends, towards the meanest insect of the forest." "To see him was to love him. . . . He was like a spirit that had darted out of its orb and found itself in another planet." What Hunt, light enough in ballast, calls his sweetness, his liberality of nature, his love of music, his fearlessness in the cause of humanity, his reverence for the Sermon on the Mount and his intense spirituality, were not these inspiration enough for Mary but that she must steal away to listen meekly to the dogmas of Dr. Nott and his kind? And if these could not hold her to him in spirit, might not his "utter loneliness" (his own words) against the world have kindled her loyalty? Why shouldn't she go? Why not indeed? But of what quality the values and of what stature the spirit of the woman who walked down those stairs from the second to the ground floor? Still, we must not take it all too seriously. As Mary herself tells us, the cock crowed thrice only.

## MARY AND SHELLEY

Dowden's apology for Mary is almost as handsome a reinforcement of Trelawny's statement as Garnett's. In later days, he says, Trelawny charged Mary with having embittered seasons of Shelley's life. But we should praise her for "recognizing the realities of life as deserving of consideration, which were matters of indifference to him (Shelley)". That phrase, "the realities of life," is good. Buxton Forman says: "I do not doubt that Trelawny who was at root her friend as long as she lived [Mary as a matter of fact lived another fourteen years after the severance of that friendship], allowed his free mind and fighting temperament to dwell less leniently than he could have afforded to do on her innate conventionality and something in her essentially feminine character bordering on frivolity." Personally, I cannot see that anything that Trelawny wrote about Mary is so damning as the passage from Shelley's own letter quoted above. Between husband and wife, or wife and husband, what worse failure can there be, what more destructive of any spiritual value in marriage, than want of understanding?

Just as Shelley's notebooks and loose pages of manuscript bear out Trelawny's account of Shelley at Leghorn, so does his account of Mary correspond with Shelley's own scattered sayings, let fall without a trace of the bias or bitterness of less exalted minds. "Mary," he said, "is under the dominion of the mythical monster 'Everybody.' I tell her I am of the Nobodies." Again, "She can't bear solitude, nor I society—the quick coupled with the dead." Or for an example of their spiritual remoteness from each other, take the verbatim report of a talk between Mary, Shelley and Trelawny given in the *Records*:

*Shelley:* Your (Trelawny's) fresh energy and promptness are catching to a vacillating mind; he (Byron) has no decision of character, he has not made up his mind, and cannot on any subject whatever. (Then standing and holding out his arms, with an expression of astonishment mingled with sorrow, he shrieked out) By what he said last night in talking over his *Cain,* the best of all his undramatic dramas, I do believe, Mary, (and here the poet paused to take breath, reluctant to expose his friend's weakness), I do believe, Mary, that he is little better than a Christian!

*Mrs. Shelley:* Hogg says that all poets are madmen, and that they should be confined in Bedlam.

*Shelley:* If Byron were inspired by Socrates' divine madness, he would eclipse all he has yet done; his faculties are dimmed by the pernicious platitudes of his London visitors.

*Mrs. Shelley:* His friends are amongst the great men of the day.

*Trelawny:* Do the men of the day outlive the day—what becomes of them?

*Shelley:* They go with the day into night, darkness, oblivion.

A woman whose mind was a fenced suburban garden was mated with a man at home only in eternity. How wide was the spiritual cleavage between himself and Mary, and how it tore his fibres, is revealed in that profoundly melancholy poem, opening, "The Serpent is shut out from Paradise." The poem is dedicated to Edward Williams, but there is a copy among the Trelawny MSS., and the third stanza contains a variant reading, "dear friend Trelawny" for "dear friends, dear friend." It runs:

Know that I only fly
  Your looks, because they stir
Griefs that should sleep, and hopes that cannot die:
The very comfort that they minister
  I scarce can bear, yet I,
So deeply is the arrow gone,
Should quickly perish if it were withdrawn.

When I return to my cold home, you ask
  Why I am not as I have ever been.
*You* spoil me for the task
  Of acting a forced part in life's dull scene,—
Of wearing on my brow the idle mask
  Of author, great or mean,
In the world's carnival. I sought
Peace thus, and but in you I found it not.

Lastly, let me quote this enchanting paragraph out of the *Recollections*:

One of the customs of the natives of this bay (Lerici) reminded me of the South Sea Islanders. At sunset, the whole population of men, women and children took to the water, sporting in it for hours like wild ducks; we occasionally did the same, Shelley especially delighting in the sport. His wife looked grave, and said, "it was improper." Shelley protested vehemently against the arbitrary power of the word, saying, "Hush, Mary, that insidious word has never been echoed by these woods and rocks: don't teach it them. It was one of the words my fellow serpent (Byron called Shelley 'The Snake') whispered into Eve's ear, and when I hear it, I wish I was far away on some lone island, with no other inhabitants than seals, sea-birds and water-rats." Then, turning to his friend, he continued, "At Pisa, Mary said a jacket was not proper, because others did not wear them, and here it's not proper to bathe, because everybody does. Oh! what shall we do?"

It is Shelley's gentleness even more than Trelawny's seaman-like downrightness which takes Mary's measure for posterity. We cannot be surprised that, according to Trelawny, Shelley slept for two years on the sofa which, after passing through the hands of Leigh Hunt, Charles Brown and Kirkup, was finally presented by Trelawny to William Rossetti, more than fifty years later.[1]

If Mary's worldliness, says Buxton Forman, made her an unsuitable wife for Shelley, still Shelley was not fit to be any woman's husband. This, I believe, is nonsense. The tragedy of his life was that he never found the right woman. Was not Mrs. Blake the ideal wife for Blake, Dorothy Wordsworth the ideal companion for William? Any woman, with less culture and more vision, less rigidity and more simplicity, less purity and more love, could have rescued him from the solitude in which he lived with Mary. Such sensibility, such exquisite awareness, such tenderness and power of love, such ideality of thought and radiant heat of personality—were these difficult qualities for a woman to live with? But the woman who wrote in her last letter to Trelawny: "One thing I will add—if I have ever found kindness, it has not been from Liberals;[1] to disengage myself from them was the first act of my freedom. The consequence was that I gained peace and civil usage, which they denied me; more I do not ask; of Fate I only ask a grave," would have found her haven (with a few judicious expurgations of her husband's works) as Lady Tennyson.

---

[1] There is some doubt whether this is the same sofa.

### THE REAL MARY

If Mary's life had been genuinely tragic, that apostrophic and moralizing *Journal* of hers might provoke a portion of the sympathy it so strenuously sought. But she never loved Shelley deeply enough to lament him in her heart with anything approaching that overwhelming sorrow she records in her *Journal* and letters to Maria Gisborne. Even the pious biography of Mrs. Marshall cannot denounce her life in England as quite so penurious, tough and unfortunate as Mary would like to convince us it was. True, her means were straitened and opportunities limited, but Mary did a good deal better for herself than her Niobesqueries would lead the reader to believe. When she wrote to Trelawny in March, 1827, "Poverty is beyond measure a torment and despair," Percy was provided for, while she announces in the same letter that she is to receive an income of £250 a year going up to £300. Well, that is not affluence, but even less is it torment and despair.

---

[1] By "Liberals," of course, Mary means the Romantics in their social and political rebellion.

When people write like that, they ought not to be sure of the next week's meals.

An episode first revealed in book-form by Mr. Gribble's *The Romantic Life of Shelley and its Sequel* (1911) is mordantly pertinent to the woman who wrote, "Mary Shelley shall be written on my tomb" and who exploited another man's love in the attempt to become Mary Washington Irving. On the way home from Italy in 1823, Mary became acquainted with John Howard Payne, the indigent author of "Home Sweet Home," and intimate friend of Washington Irving. Payne fell in love with her, not tempestuously as Trelawny was wont to fall in love, but with all the delicacies, discretions and diffidences of the "prithee, why so pale and wan" school devotion. Mary would have none of him, but strategically blew upon his trembling flame, partly in order to obtain free theatre-tickets from him, and partly to induce him to act as her intermediary with Washington Irving. Both Payne's and Mary's letters, discovered among his papers at his death,[1] unmistakably show that she used him as a "stalking-horse" for overtures of marriage with Irving, a task which he carried out with an heroically wrong-headed self-abnegation. Meanwhile, the free tickets for the woman who wrote, "What should I, a lone woman, have to do with such things?" poured in with Biblical regularity for a period of seven years from 1824 to 1831. The suit, however, had a less triumphant issue, and Mary suffered the poetic justice of manipulating another man's love for self-interested ends by the humiliation of learning that Irving was in love with somebody else.

---

[1] Payne's letters to Irving about Mary, Payne's letters to Mary about Irving and Mary's letters to Payne were privately printed by the Boston Bibliophile Society in 1910. Mr. Gribble gives extracts from them.

When again she wrote: "The wisest and best have loved me. The beautiful and glorious and noble have looked on me with the divine expression of love. . . . But now I am not loved. . . . I am a wreck"—she had quite an agreeable little circle of her own which she did not fail to enjoy. And when she spends much the same measure and eloquence of passionate grief upon a dank day in London as she did over the loss of Shelley, we are inclined to suspect the profundity of the emotion that called them forth. The curse and the blessing of Mary's feelings was their unreality, and they were unreal because she possessed an unlimited capacity for self-deception. We are both relieved and sorrowful that she did not feel with anything like the intensity that she says she did, and we realise from her gesturing and lachrymose style that the hypertrophied expression of her emotions was a desperate attempt on her part to convince herself rather than us that she did feel as she said she did. She was an obvious subject for psychoanalysis. A woman so gripped by the conventions as to cherish them when she was the wife of the exiled Shelley was a woman impervious to the greater emotions; she wept from her head rather than her heart, paying tribute all the time to the superiority of the heart.

There is real tragedy in the words she wrote on November 10th, four months after Shelley's death:

> Love! What a word for me to write! Yet my miserable heart, permit me yet to love—to see him in beauty, to feel him in beauty, to be interpenetrated by the sense of his excellence; and then to love singly, eternally, ardently and not fruitlessly, for I am still his—still the chosen one of that

blessed spirit—still vowed to him for ever and ever! . . . A cold heart! Have I a cold heart? God knows! But none need envy the icy region this heart encircles; and at least the tears are hot which the emotions of this cold heart forces me to shed. A cold heart! Yes, it would be cold enough if all were as I wished it—cold or burning in the flame for whose sake I forgive this, and would forgive every imputation!

But the tragedy is not a heart thus robbed of its heavenly treasure and crying out in its desolation, but of one that knew it was not desolate enough and shrank appalled from that knowledge. It sought to recover the self-esteem lost in that knowledge by heaping coals of fire upon the imputation of that coldness; it sought to hide from itself in a passion of protestation and repudiation. There is the real grief—that of the forgetful heart that seeks to make a principle of memory, of the cold heart that longs to "love singly, eternally, ardently," of the knowledgeable heart that would be deeper and nobler than it is, of the self-deceiving heart that cannot quite deceive itself. Mary's suffering in that passage was that she could not suffer, that she realised the ideal of loving without being able to love.

Her *Journal* is exasperating, but likewise pitiful, for her brain was so much in advance of her heart that she knew all the time what she ought to feel—without feeling it. Happier by far if she could have married Rogers or Southey or any of the dinner-jacketed bards, for then she could have indulged her taste for genteel society, delivered her spinsterish moralisings and cultivated her culture without that devastating sense that something was wrong with her, and which she did her utmost to conceal from herself and the world under such a deluge of right sentiment. But the transfiguration of a great love and the tragedy of a great loss were never hers.

Trelawny's diagnosis of Mary is a perfectly honest and just one, and the insight into character which led him to measure Shelley at his true value, did not, though it took him a long time to disengage her from the disarming aura of Shelley, desert him with Mary. His simplicity saw further than her intellect.

For her failure to accomplish her high destiny as the heart's companion of the visionary wanderer from the world's way, her father (if Trelawny's statement is not exaggerated) must bear a part but heavy responsibility. But for his criminal system of keeping her in ignorance of the great movement of release from the social bigotry and petrified codes of the period, she might have met that destiny more worthily. But when the sunlight beats upon her who longed to creep into the protective shades of her own self-valuation, her little plant of significant living is withered and is dust.

# CHAPTER V

## *LIFE AND LETTERS*

## 1822—1847

### § 1 LETTERS

### TRELAWNY'S FAILURE

TRELAWNY'S inner life pivots upon Shelley as integrally as the ocean tides take their motions from the moon. There is no doubt that he saw in Shelley the perfect man he wished to have been himself, had he not had poured into his composition something of the foreign matter of Byron the sensationalist, Byron of the dual part, at civil war with himself until he tried to make peace in a country equally divided against itself. Trelawny hated Byron because he saw the face-value of what he wished to appear before the world, though he failed to see it as an expression of that unresting dualism which paralysed Byron's every enterprise, gave him a posturing unreality, and was reflected in part of his own self. He loved Shelley because he saw in him that unity between instinct, thought and action which his own nature intuitively sought, and, after Shelley's death, practically failed to achieve. He perceived in Shelley what every pondering man must see in whomsoever is greatly beloved of him—an idea embodied which represents for him his union with the spiritual world. And when Shelley died in what must have seemed to him a *lusus Naturae* so contradictorily cruel, by the mocking ingratitude of their own loved element, a portion of night fell across his life from which he never emerged and that lies murkily upon most of his letters. He could not lose his friend without forfeiting something of his own romantic vision, drawn consciously from Shelley and unconsciously from the springs of his own nature.

For what must surprise the reader who plucks out stray biographical and abundant psychological material from the letters between 1822 and 1880 is how poor a harvest a man of such prolific parts, vehement practice and dynamic impulse gathered of his many years. The Greek crusade, the writing of the *Adventures of a Younger Son* and the *Recollections,* the marriage with Lady Goring, the somewhat meaningless vagabondage of the American tour during which he swam Niagara Falls [1]—these are the only discoverable "point-events" in a further lifetime of nearly sixty years. Whether we regard Trelawny as man of letters or man of action, united in him as they were in his master Shelley, we cannot subscribe them with Blake's "Exuberance is beauty." It is true the Trelawny is to be remembered much more as a personality than as a man of achievements; his poetry was in his individual self as Shelley's was in the union he made between life and imagination. Trelawny's contribution to the Romantic Revival is Trelawny. But he was most distinctively and completely himself when he was in living contact with Shelley, and when that contact was broken, he was divided up again with periods of almost febrile activity interspersed with blanks.

We find a corresponding lack of fullness of response to life in the *Letters*. They are acutely retrospective, for his deepest heart was left behind at Pisa and Lerici.

---

[1] See Appendix v.

They are full of thoroughly Elizabethan reflections upon the transitoriness and vanity of the show of things and these words from a letter to Mary written from Cornwall in September, 1828, reflect a persistent mood:

> Death and Time have made sad havoc amongst my old friends here; they are never idle, and yet they go on as if they concerned us not, and thus [we] dream our lives away till we wake no more, and then our bodies are thrown into a hole in the earth, like a dead dog's, that infects the atmosphere, and the void is filled up, and we are forgotten. Can such things be, and overcome us like a summer cloud, without our special wonder?

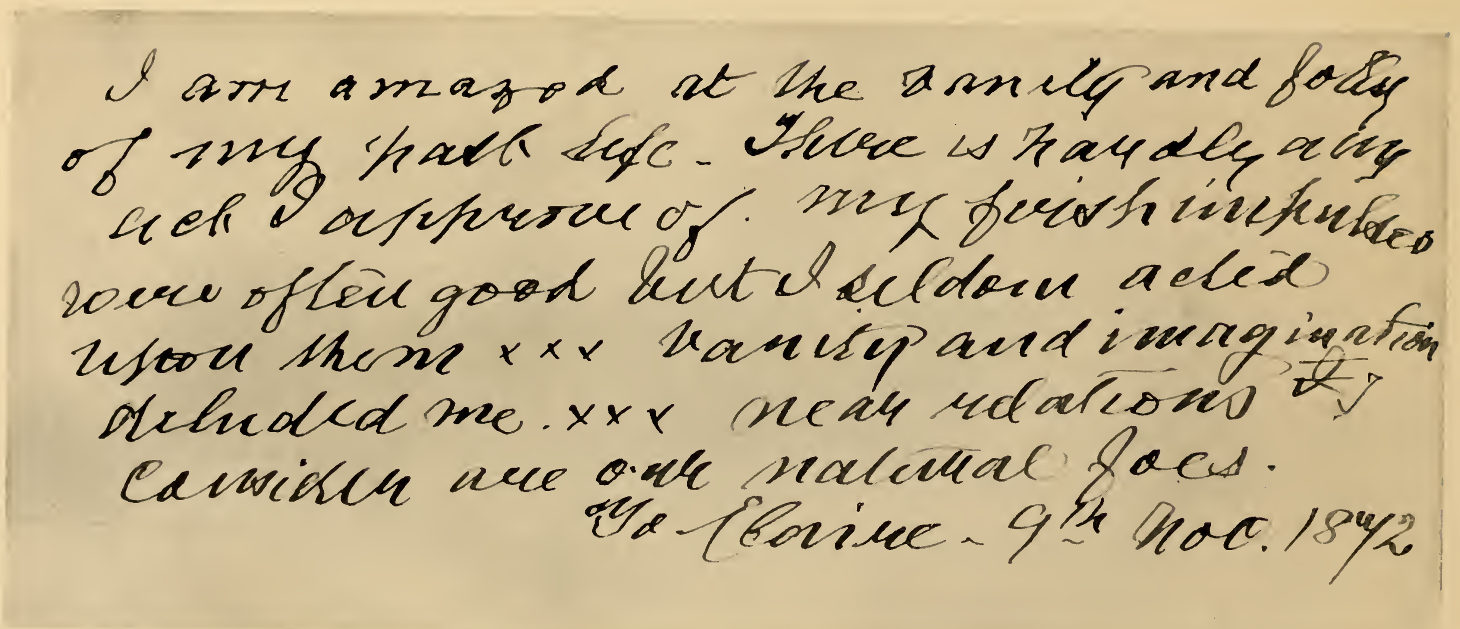
"I never clung to life and would not live any part of it over again," he wrote in an unpublished letter to Augusta White, "—we play our little useless game and the bubble bursts and there's an end." The melancholy of isolation, of frustration, distraction and restlessness, the inconsequences of a powerful but derelict spirit are the dominant note of these letters.

### HIS HEADSTRONG LETTERS

They are extremely good letters, all the same, and not the least of their virtues is that they are all unconscious of any eyes but their receivers'. The bulk of them, published in Buxton Forman's volume in 1910—many of them obtained from the Clairmont collection of Shelley documents and relics, while others were secured from Miss Paola Clairmont through a pilgrimage of this sterling editor to Vienna—were written to Claire Clairmont, Mary Shelley and William Rossetti in the order named according to quantity. A few odd ones to Jane Williams, Captain Roberts, the Hunt brothers, Colonel Stanhope, Joseph Severn, Moxon the publisher and others complete the list, while a further (unpublished) packet in my temporary possession were inscribed to Mrs. Draper (Miss Augusta White).

They are so amazingly unstudied not only in the special aroma of privacy breathed from them but in grammar, spelling, punctuation and even sense that they are unique of their kind. "I have never," justly wrote Buxton Forman, "seen a letter or note of Trelawny's which was expressed just as any other man would have expressed it." They are dressing-gown letters, unshaven letters, positively illiterate letters to such an extent that those of Keats, Shelley and Byron seem essays in comparison and Chesterfield's letters might have been printed on handmade paper, Cowper's sent hot-foot to the Press. Had a born babble-wren like Leigh Hunt written them, they would have been intolerable, but, as it is, they are a perfect vehicle for a direct and indomitable character who really was as innocent of the conventions as the infant Hercules, strangling serpents in his cradle. Their hurly-burly of words treading on each others' toes, their tempestuous syntax and unpolished phrasing are adapted to the warmth and often truculence of their contents. And of the former there is abundance, for Trelawny was true to himself when he wrote

> I have ever found that those who have the least heart have the most reason—remember I speak of reason not as that divine and glorious property which distinguishes human beings from brutes—but to the cruel and absurd practice of profaning it down to the every day concerns of life, thereby stifling all the tender and generous feelings of our nature—which imperil us spontaneously to all sorts of kindnesses and fill our hearts with love—it leaves indistinguishable the gelid and heartless from the warm and true-hearted.



I am amazed at the vanity and folly of my past life. There is hardly any act I approve of. my first impulses were often good but I seldom acted upon them ××× vanity and imagination deluded me. ××× near relations & cowards are our natural foes.

To Claire – 9th Nov. 1872

FACSIMILE OF AN EXTRACT FROM A LETTER OF E. J. TRELAWNY TO CLAIRE CLAIRMONT

You are always certain with Trelawny's letters, as Buxton Forman says, that he never wrote one set of opinions for publication and another for home consumption. The whole feeling man went into them with a cataractic swoop, and the pauses between sentences and parts of sentences, the very orthography of words, dictated by common use and convenience, had to look after themselves. The dams sometimes held, and sometimes they did not, for his thoughts fell upon the page like a storm of rain.

### HIS LOVES

The following extract from a letter to Claire, written at Genoa, on December 4th, 1822, consists of one sentence:

Yes, as much as indurance has hardened me, I must give you the consolation of knowing—that you have inflicted on me indiscribable tortures—that your letter has inflicted an incurable wound which is festering and inflaming my blood—and my pride and passion, warring against my ungovernable love, has in vain essayed to hide my wounded feelings—by silently submitting to my evil destiny—my intercourse with you has been that of the heart—I have used no false colours, no hypocrisy—no art, enacted no part—I resigned myself to the pure and untainted emotions which you awoke—and when in absence I was obliged to reflect on that, which overwhelmed all other thoughts (my Love for you)—finding that all my hopes of peace (of happiness I had none, believing it to be an ideal shadow) were centered in you—I wished to wipe from you every stain whether real, or imaginary—which the jealous and Lynx eyes of a Lover disquiet themselves with—I fearlessly opened my heart, confessed my weaknesses, poured out all my disjointed thoughts—intreated your counsel, aid, judgment, looked to you as my destiny—considered you bound to me by ties nothing could tear asunder—would have broken through all others

> to do you service—I tell you, Clare, and my word is sufficient at this era—that whether you shake me from you or not—that you—*that you* use me most unjustly!—that I have, and do love you with the warmest and most fervent and unalterable affection, that every sentiment and sensation that the purest Love has awakened in my heart are all exclusively concentrated in you.

As Claire, according to her outraged lover, was about this time accusing him of being a proud, peevish, sullen, domineering, self-willed, revengeful, unrelenting, ascetic, hypocritical, deceitful, base, cowardly, ungenerous, cold-blooded, selfish, heartless villain, Trelawny apparently had some grounds for pouring into her this barrage of indignation. Of course, as literature, it is a thoroughly bad letter, and I feel some compunction in selecting it for quotation among so many others that are of more robust a stamp or more lovable a likeness. But when one loves one is so often long-winded, yet scant of breath into the bargain, and the suffering in this letter is not faked like Mary's in her *Journal*, however tempestuously futile the stricken one's expression of it.

It is a little difficult to take Trelawny's loves seriously, because there were so many of them. In an unpublished letter to Augusta White, with whom he was probably at one time in love, he wrote:

> My motto is,
>
> "He who loves but once alone
> Love's full power hath never known,
> Only he true bliss can tell
> Who often loves, and always well."
>
> And my enemies must allow I've ever fulfilled the motto.

There were Tersitza and Claire and Augusta White and Lady Goring and the chit who supplanted her and the Zela of the *Younger Son* and perhaps others not a few, though certainly not so many as Mary in a demure, subacid fashion, rallied him with. Claire prudently denied herself to him; she was not anxious to repeat her experience as a discarded mistress.

## FIDELITY IN FRIENDSHIP

Trelawny's emotional variabilities as a lover contrast very remarkably with his extraordinary tenacity of feeling as a man. I have already quoted extracts from the *Letters* to show that his love of Shelley not merely endured into advanced old age but retained all its primal freshness to a degree that baffles the conception of time as a travelling from a given point to a further one. It burned as brightly at eighty as at thirty. It was more than an evergreen devotion because its foliage was of that virile and burnished novelty which is the pride of the oak in spring. Critics have made much of his rupture with Mary as an infidelity of friendship, but I have tried to show that the remarkable feature of that friendship was not its natural decease but its artificial prolongation. "Trust me," he wrote to Claire, when he was in Rome, gardening the grave of Shelley, "I am better than the superficially judging world thinks me—my heart and soul is rich in love and tender affection—but they are hid in a rough and forbidding exterior," and to Augusta White, "My mind is rough and prickly but I am milky and soft within," and again, four years before he met Shelley, "My study through life has been to hide under the mask of affected roughness the tenderest, warmest and most affectionate sensibility." No doubt, Trelawny liked so to think of himself, but, unlike Byron, he could not act a part very different from his innate self. He had not a great deal of sensibility, but the warmth of heart was not the less genuine because he thus paraded it. Such warmth is the true reading of his relations with Mary, and the reason why it took him fifty years [1] before he wrote of Mary in these terms:

> As to Mary Shelley, you are welcome to her: she was nothing but the weakest of her sex—she was the Poet's wife and as bad a one as he could have found—her aim and object was fashionable society; she was conventional in everything and tormented him by jealousy and would have made him like Tom Moore if she could,

and, a year later (1872):

> She would have been better matched with a conventional commonplace man of the world—that went to church and parties: as she grew older and saw something of the world and its absurdities, she saw her folly and looked back with bitter remorse at her past life.

In the same way, his amorous fondness for Augusta White, alive in 1819, and more tender than his love for Claire, cherished the glowing image of itself as late as 1873, when he was still writing to her. Though his tormented love for Claire subsided into a more equable flow, and though their meetings were but drops fetched out of an ocean of separation, both in time and distance, yet his correspondence with her continued for fifty-three years, from the end of 1822 to the end of 1875. Such pertinacity in feeling is the more striking from the evidence on record as to her real attitude towards him. In the same month (March, 1830) as Trelawny wrote a letter to Claire, opening "Dearest Clare" and concluding, "Adieu, dearest Clare—and if fortune is not altogether evil—she will in pity conduct this to you. Adieu, dearest," Claire wrote to Mary from Dresden:

---

[1] Though it is true he did write in 1838: "Mary is the blab of blabs—she lives on hog's wash—what utter failures most people are."

> Of Trelawny I know little. He wrote to me, describing where he was living and what kind of life he was leading. I have not yet answered him, although I make a sacred promise every day not to let it go over my head without so doing. But there is a certain want of sympathy between us which makes writing to him extremely disagreeable to me. I admire, esteem and love him; some excellent qualities he possesses in a degree that is unsurpassed, but then it is in exactly another direction from my centre and my impetus. He likes a turbid and troubled life, I a quiet one; he is full of fine feelings and has no principles, I am full of fine principles but never had a feeling; he receives all his impressions through his heart, I through my head. Que voulez-vous? Le Moyen de se recontrer (*sic*) when one is bound for the North Pole and the other for the South.

That is an unusually frank piece of self-revelation for so nimble a spirit as Claire, whose elusiveness so disquieted Trelawny until he accepted it as part of the incorrigible flux of life. It also explains why in an access of rage he once wrote to Claire (January 1st, 1829): "I consider you very fish-like—bloodless—and insensible—you are the counterpart of Werter—a sort of bread butter and worsted stockings—like Charlotte fit for 'suckling fools and chronicling small beer.' Adieu old Aunt."

### FIDELITY IN FAITH

It is not without reason, then, that Trelawny insisted, as he does in his letters to Augusta White, upon his unchangeableness of heart, a too capacious heart, but not one whose impressions were volatile. Claire herself had no doubt of that when she wrote to Mary from Moscow in the October of 1825: "I am not afraid of his friendship growing cold for me, for I am sure he is unchangeable on that point, but I am afraid [Trelawny was then in the Cave of Odysseus on Mt. Parnassus] for his happiness and safety."

Even more salient than his continuities of affection was his inflexibility of faith in the vision of life he had —in its cruder form—derived from Shelley, a vision which his own wild-natured being, confirmed no doubt in its tendencies by the cruelty of his father and his early estrangement from polite society, had eagerly absorbed. Trelawny, writes Buxton Forman, was less tainted by the commercialism and snobbery of the last century than any other figure. I should be inclined to put it more strongly than that. Trelawny strode through the most injurious revolution in values of our history—that of the Victorian period, at once so savage in its philosophy and naked industrialism and so creamy in its sentiment—without turning a hair. Neither the Little Bo-Peep of the drawing-room cult of the age was able to seduce him nor the brazen Moloch of material progress to dismay him from his allegiance to the dead Romantics of his prime. Of the lost race of Prometheus and Hyperion, of whom even Tennyson admitted that "however mistaken they may be, they did yet give the world another heart and new pulses," he was the sole survivor. He escaped the bondage of this new world, because he hardly so much as noticed it. "I have been a dreamer all my life," he wrote to Augusta White in

1833, "and patience herself has given over all hope of my reformation."

His dreams were retrospective of the Arno and the Bay of Spezia where had lived one who would have regenerated the world. The gimcrack romanticism of the mid-Victorian period, quite different from the fabulous knight-errantry which he dramatised in himself, or the *beau sabreur* affectations of his Byronic side, held no appeal for him, while his disillusionment was more in character with that of our own age than with the hard optimism of the Victorians. The man who wrote incoherently to Claire in 1836:

> The Great Captain that commands this planet of ours—is a great arithmetician—and has lines and figures for his ministers—the wildest freaks of comets above us, or earthquakes beneath us—or hurricanes—are but as the lesser convulsions of us things—that play our melodramatic absurdities—"on this our dingy earth" of war and revolution—the greater as the lesser effects no real changes—on the contrary they restore the equilibrium—thus everything ends as it began, immovable, unalterable, immutable—I that once thought I could put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes—now feel that I have but existed—as a frog in a swamp; the snail-paced and slug-blooded—that pass vegetable lives—or I that flutter in this our elementary cage and think I am flying over boundless space—lead the same lives—it's all the same—we are in reality but animated stocks and stones.—

had, however materialist the passage, less in common with his contemporaries at that period than with his forefathers of three centuries before. So little touched was this Ishmael by the convulsions of the new epoch, mechanically so headlong in pace, institutionally so intricate and expansive, and humanly so retrogressive, that his loyalty to the lost romantic ideal might be called an obdurate conservatism, an individualistic Banburyism, were it not so innocently true to his nature. He was without exception the only one of the great Victorians who wasn't a Victorian, for every one of them, however strenuous his revolt, was branded by his age.

In the abortive revolutionary period of the early thirties, he sang his saga of liberty in the full-throated fashion of an age which had become far more antiquated to that generation than the Roman which it had begun to mimic.

> The changes in the opinions of all mankind [he wrote to Mary of all people] and other topics are favourable to such writers as I and the Poets of Liberty whom I have selected. We shall no longer be hooted at; it is our turn to triumph now. Would those glorious spirits, to whose genius the present age owes so much [the age of course had totally forgotten them] could witness the triumphant success of these opinions. I think I see Shelly's fine eyes glisten, and faded cheeks glow with fire unearthly. England, France and Belgium free, the rest of Europe must follow; the theories of tyrants all over the world are shaken as by an earthquake; they may be propped up for a time, but their fall is inevitable.

And again to Mary, he suggests the insertion of a "diatribe" into the MS. of the *Younger Son,* part of which runs:

> I went forth, too, my hand ever against them ("the cursed dynasty of the Bourbons"), and when tyranny had triumphed, I wandered an exile in the world and leagued myself with men worthy to be called so, for they, inspired by wisdom, uncoiled the frauds contained in lying legends, which had so long fatally deluded the majority of man-

kind. Alas! those apostles have not lived to see the tree they planted fructify; would they had tarried a little while to behold this new era of 1830-31, how they would have rejoiced to behold the leagued conspiracy of kings broken, and their bloodhound priests and nobles muzzled, their impious confederacy to enslave and rob the people paralysed by a blow that has shaken their usurpation to the base, and must inevitably be followed by their final overthrow.

A raw and dateable "diatribe" it is, a parody of the Shelley of *Queen Mab,* and distasteful to us who for four years heard the most barbarous slaughter in history magniloquently lauded in not dissimilar terms. No wonder Byron so mercilessly guyed him! Trelawny, "worldwide liberty's lifelong lover," as Swinburne somewhat thickly sang of him, had shaped no metaphysic out of the contact of his mind with experience, and so apostrophised the spirit of liberty with the gesticulations of a Peter Pan. But he was not bombinating *in vacuo*—he lived what he felt, if by an onset of fugitive storms rather than in a steady trade-wind. And as Edward Garnett truly points out, Trelawny was as far in advance of his age in the assimilation of liberal ideas as were Shelley and Byron in the creation of them. He not only deranged his hair (which was how Mary saw him) but "the collection of petrified codes and fossil theories of the day." And are *we,* he adds, to criticise the men who vigorously attacked and demolished the social and religious bigotry of the early nineteenth century?

Mr. Brailsford says truly of him that he would have said with Tom Paine, "Where liberty is not, there is my country," for he was a rebel against all forms of authority, the enemy of every Empire and the iconoclast of all sterile conventions. His ties were with men fighting against despotism, no matter what the cut of their clothes and the colour of their skins. It was as natural for him to serve under the French flag as for Paine to join Washington's army. One of his favourite books was Volney's *Ruins of Empires,* that "grammar of revolution" which he hauls into the pages of the *Younger Son.* A Liberal of the 1820 school, he was consistent to his principles of liberty for nations and the individual throughout his whole life, and though he saw Italy accept the Austrian, Greece the Turk and England Peterloo, an Ajax he remained. "My early convictions," he wrote to Augusta White from 7 Pelham Crescent, Brompton, in April, 1873, "have hardened with my bones. I am a thorough Republican and free thinker . . . the people are getting stronger everywhere." Not that this declamatory faith was left uninfused with the strong waters of his buccaneering apprenticeship. "As we are poor," wrote Robin Hood naughtily to his nice Mary, "the rich are our inheritance, and we are justified on all and every occasion to rob and use them."

He told Mary at the end of June, 1831, that if he could get a seat in a reformed House of Commons, "or if there was a probability of revolution" he would return to England from Florence, and as he actually returned in 1832, it is quite possible that the Reform Bill was the magnet. But England sadly disappointed him and in 1833 he went off to America, where he remained until June, 1835. But that he was interested in the problems of Parliamentary government appears from an unpublished and rather incoherent letter written to Seymour Kirkup in Italy just before he left England for America:

> The blackguards have again conspiered (*sic*)—you see they are throwing back Bills to Parliment (*sic*) and preparing to turn out and show fight for loaves & fishes. The Wigs (*sic*) are exasperated—a deadly hatred—is hearted (*sic*) amongst the aristocracy—and out of that the people will work their salvation—our latest news is that Parliment (*sic*) will be soon proroged (*sic*)—and after the lapse of two months possibly dissolved—& a new one summoned—others think a Peel ministry will prefer trying their strength with the present Parliment which I think is the most probable as this is a Tory elected parlement (*sic*) (I mean when they were in power) when the Municipal Corporation Bill is passed the English may say they have a representative goverment (*sic*)—these corporations are the last strongholds of the aristocracy when we drive them out of these we may demolish them according to Law and then—I ought now that I am speaking of reform to tell you about my sojourn with the republicans on the other side the water—but I have neither time nor space. We will discuss these things by the Arno.

In South Carolina in the December of that same year, he wrote to Claire:

> The wealthier classes in America attempt to imitate the English in their social institutions—and that is an absurdity—but they are a small sect—with small means and little influence—Democratic institutions are using up to the stump their goose quills—the Sovereign people are bearing down all opposition—they are working out triumphantly their grand experiment—that all men are born free and equal!—the only blot on their charter, slavery, will gradually disappear—it must be spunged out—or cut out soon.

Rousseau—Shelley—Trelawny, that is the genealogy of this passage. It was in the Southern States that Trelawny bought the freedom of a man slave. Doubts have been cast upon the authenticity of this report. Through the courtesy of Mrs. Call (his daughter, Letitia), I am able to give the actual Deed of Conveyance:

> I, Emma Maria, for and in consideration of the sum of one thousand Dollars do bargain, sell and deliver to the said Edward Trelawny my black slave John—to have and to hold the said black boy John for his use at his new settlement in Virginia or elsewhere—Dated at Charlestown on the 11th of January, 1834.

It was one of those unobtrusive acts of generosity—like pardoning Whitcombe his attempt upon his life on Mt. Parnassus and sharing his purse with Mary—which was unknown until his death.

These political views—garishly expressed as they are —Trelawny not only maintained as zealously, if without his former self-advertisement, in his cottage at Sompting when he was eighty, as he did at the Casa Magni when he was thirty, but brought them into relation with their human and natural counterparts. He loved America, just as W. H. Hudson and Paul Fountain loved it, for its "boundless horizons unbroken by the trumpery works of man," and like them, a wanderer in incult places, shared their hatred of urban life.

> Virginia is twice as large [as England]—with no more than half a million population—this is delightful—after being almost suffocated in Europe, [what would he have said to the Underground at 6.00 p.m. on a wet night?], crammed together like the audience in a theatre. . . . In the wilderness—encompassed by the works of nature— . . . I feel so elated that life is of itself a pleasure—when I enter a town it is a pain—the only place I could find peace in would be where village bell—did *never* knoll to church.

Though for a short time he allowed himself to be petted by London society, a lion with a ribbon round his neck, he radically abhorred the social world for its formal finesse, duplicity and artifice as much as for its inequitable privileges in the distribution of wealth.

> All my friends and acquaintances [he wrote to Claire] are picked up clandestinely; the only people worth knowing is where there is a demonstration of its being the mutual wish of two people—and the ceremony can be evaded—such is my habit—the forcing myself through the medium of a third person I abhor.

He watched the same struggle in individual human beings that he saw on the political stage.

> Is there not something very attractive in Jane Boccella? [he wrote to Claire] so frank, so honest, so generous—so warm and single-hearted—so bold and yet so sentative (*sic*)—so brave and yet so weak—so vain and yet so loving—impelled by instinct to act nobly—and by education to be [the] veriest trifler—the emotions of a generous soul—struggling to free itself—"A chain of lead around a soul of fire." [1]

In all this, Hudson and Fountain, elementals like himself, would have found a brother. But they certainly would not have acceded to his revolutionary sympathies no matter how modernised. That is where Trelawny expressed his synthesis, partly natural and partly acquired from Shelley. He had in him the noble possibility of that completeness and single-hearted acceptance of life whose ideal, as formulated by Mr. Fausset, I sketched in the third chapter. It was a unity of length because he never swerved from it, and of breadth because it inspired all his activities, though even Shelley could not give him depth.

[1] This line is a misquotation from *Epipsychidion.*

### DISAPPOINTMENT WITH LIFE

But, as I turn over the pages of the letters, his failure to realise that possibility is not to be denied, while his succession of aimless love-affairs seems out of harmony with that remarkable consistency of mind that bore him from Pisa to the grave, a very old man, without, for all his errantry, his ever leaving, metaphorically speaking, the Shelleys' house. Are not these two factors, his loving so often and accomplishing so little susceptible of the same explanation? There is a link between them, for the waywardness of his loves is paralleled by the restlessness of his wanderings, interleaved with periods of stagnation. Only one great emotion informed Trelawny's life after Shelley's death and no great action outside the writing of his two books, both inspired by Shelley, provided a channel for his inordinate vitality, his superb health, his tireless zeal for liberty and his unique personality. There is surely something missing here. The only relevant comment on his many loves is that he frittered himself away on them; on his spasmodic travels and odd quiescences that they reveal some central dislocation. In July, 1827, he wrote to Augusta White from Duke Street, St. James's: "I am a boat hauled up on the beach—out of the reach of the tide rotting in idleness." [1] He was conscious that he was not fulfilling himself and stung by the knowledge off he would go, somewhere, anywhere. Wandering, he told her, "is my chief delight and solace for retrospection" and "my memory is constantly reverting to the past."

---

[1] Cf. also to Claire, four years later, from Florence: "I am like a bark stranded on the shore—by some extraordinary influx of the sea—kept high and dry without the hope of the tide ever rising high enough to float me again."

As early as 1833 he who was to live for nearly another fifty years with barely a day's illness, wrote her from Niagara (see Appendix v): "I am old—very old if you consider what my life has been—a horse that is early used is prematurely worn out. I am worn out and not worth a damn." This from the man who had just swum Niagara!

The sense of dissatisfaction is omnipresent in Trelawny's letters and I am convinced that it was this disappointment with life that drove him to his many love-affairs rather than their failures which bred his disappointment. True, they were dispiriting enough. His high-hearted Zela perishing in the all-Danaë flower of her warmth and vividness: Julia Addison, his second wife, "bankrupted me in fortune as well as happiness"; Tersitza, the barbaric child with her passion for Parisian dresses. And Claire, what anchorage could any man find in that siren Lamia? Even the brave and high-spirited Lady Goring so ate him up with her glittering extravagances that when she returned from a visit to his London house, she found everything in the house sold up except a couple of kitchen chairs, two beds and a deal table, and he silently handed her the receipts. But Trelawny took them, one after the other, all in the day's journey, and it is plain that none of their or his inconstancies injected a lasting toxin into his blood.[1] He delighted in the society of women and possessed that intuitive understanding of the feminine quality which women value in men above all things, but owing to the crudities of our male educational system, so rarely enjoy. No man who had been severely mauled by a woman or had himself treated them as a bird-catcher could have written to Claire as late as 1870: "You say he [Shelley] was womanly in some things—so he was, and we men should all be much better if we had a touch of their feeling, sentiment, earnestness and constancy."

---

[1] "Dear Mary," he wrote in 1831, "I love women and you know it, but my life is not dedicated to them."

### THE REASON

Had Trelawny been a man of sickly constitution or infected with the soul-malady of the incomplete French Romantics, or, like poor Cowper, arbitrarily cut off from his intuitions and love of nature, or enslaved by family inhibitions like Ruskin, or much persecuted by the world, or reduced to continuous poverty, or a neglected writer or a friendless solitary, we could have better understood the bitter despondency of so many of his letters, which, as he often said, "requires all my resolution to fight against its ascendancy." But in a man of such metal and unquenchable fires, afflicted with none of these diseases, virile above the common lot of men, what explains it? When he writes to Claire in 1828:

> Whilst the most worthless are the most powerful—rascals and villains reign triumphant thro' the world—and their cause is sanctified and made holy by success—we who are of the weakest side must be content to pine in sorrow and solitude—to grieve o'er grievances we cannot redress—we know our efforts are vain, and yet it deters not the just and noble from shedding their blood freely and fearlessly.—

the pessimism appears more personal than the cause for it warrants.

Trelawny had periods of poverty, but hardly serious and prolonged enough to cause him to write to Claire from Florence four years later:

> I am now fiercely struggling to enable myself to indulge in my love of locomotion—I cannot indure location—my existence is burthensome whilst I am fixed by anything like ties—and nothing but my poverty has detained me here thus long. . . . You are happier than I am—for in despite of the past you can yet hope for the future—whilst I utterly despair.

Again he writes in the same year:

> You deceive yourself, Claire, in thinking there are none so wretched as yourself! All who are unfortunate make the same assertion. I have known those who were out of all comparison more wretched;—that mentally and bodily have suffered such tortures, that I would suffer all you have suffered during your life—than what they endured hourly. —I have not only seen a considerable portion of the world —and played a part—but I have looked into it with an experienced and thinking eye—it is full of misery—I have sometimes thought that the planet we are dwelling in is Hell—and that we are suffering the penalty for sins we have committed in some anterior state of existence in some other planet; do we not all suffer here? . . . pain and pleasure seem scattered promiscuously into the crowd of the world—the foremost and most grasping and impudent and worthless of the rabble thrust themselves foremost in seizing the good—whilst the evils of life fall to the share of the weak, the worthy, and the unobtrusive.

"Time," he wrote to Claire in the same strain nearly forty years later, "will put me in his wallet as alms for oblivion—life is very long considering how little we do with it that's worth doing—our distinguishing faculty from the other animals is vanity and folly.—We have the worst of all the animals and the best of none."

Such backward-looking, such restlessness as of a horse tormented by flies, such preoccupation alike with the follies of the painted scene and his own sterility in it, such a cry, repeated again and again—the world is out of joint and with it I—show that the lack of correspondence in that world between inward truth and outward seeming had stolen into Trelawny himself. He had breathed the contagion of the world's slow stain and vainly mutinied, he the freeman and freebooter, against the paralysis. He had lost touch with that creative unity which was potential in his own nature and into which Shelley, by his personality, his magnetism, and a redeeming conception of life, manifested in his own person, and enchanted in his art, had given him an undying glimpse. It is clear that Trelawny did not know what was the matter with himself, but we are enlightened who can weigh the tremendous impact upon him both of Shelley the man and of Shelley the possessed of a divine vision. The loss of Shelley was, in no straining of sense, the loss of himself. He did not consciously formulate to his own mind the philosophic implications of that ideal harmony that had fired him, but the curious mixture in his later life of a ferment of meaningless activity and the bewilderments of a delusive inertia from which he hurled his savage scorn upon the world, was the effect upon a man who had once seen Shelley plain and except in dream saw him no more. Add to that the loss of confidence in himself for which both Byron and his giddy life in Greece were responsible—and the *Letters* are truly revealing.

### THE GHOST OF SHELLEY

How crowded year after year the letters are with references to anything and everything to do with Shelley! Pages in the earlier ones about the tomb in Rome; more pages in the later ones to Claire about her possession of Shelley documents. His letters to William Rossetti are about little else than Shelley, constantly pouring out new versions of or new marginalia upon the old stories. He was as much up in arms about the isolation of "the lorn and outraged Poet," the omission of the *Queen Mab* notes and other matters relating to Shelley three years before his death in 1881, as he was intoxicated with Shelley himself at Pisa and Lerici. His last letters were concerned with his burial by Shelley's side in the true spirit of the only good line in Swinburne's poem—"Shelley, Trelawny rejoins thee here." He took the most eager interest in every edition or life of Shelley and was delighted with Rossetti's "work of love";

> Peacock had fancy and learning, Hogg the same; Leigh Hunt did not understand Shelley's poetry; Medwin, superficial; Mrs. Shelley, fear of running counter to the cant of society restrained her. You alone have the qualities essential to the task, and have done it admirably.

To Buxton Forman, a year before his death, he handed over the Clint portrait and the collection of Shelley letters in the *Records*, describing to him how he had bought Shelley's poems in a small bookshop in London, fifty-eight years before. These acorns, he remarked of the materials he gave to Forman, incorporated into the edition of the Prose Works, "have grown into lofty oaks. The poet was one of the few Authors who could bear, without loss, every act of his life, from youth to maturity, to be made prospect to all the world."

But for Shelley he would never have written the record of his wild adventures in youth, for their emotional landscape is wholly coloured by what he received from a tutelage of six months in the Poet's company. Thus those six months not merely informed his whole subsequent life of nearly sixty years, but actually gave the world the immortal record of the flamboyant career which preceded them. It was a period long enough to inspire him with an unparalleled constancy of devotion, but it was too short and too abruptly ended for him to resolve his discords and make his peace with life. For as Shelley had mirrored for Trelawny the image of the "good life," in his own transparent self, so was it shattered when his master was taken back into the elements from which, transfused into his imagination, he had fashioned a new heaven upon earth.

### § II LIFE IN GREECE

The biographical crop of the *Letters* grows thinly and in isolated patches. But such as there is of it confirms the psychological impression already reaped. The relatively largest portion of it refers to the Greek Expedition in 1823. Trelawny, as I have suggested in chapter II, was not at his best in Greece. The welter of the campaigns; the sordid greeds and wolfish rivalries underlying their picturesqueness seemed to throw up a kind of reversion in him back to his privateering days with de Ruyter who certainly absorbed a good deal of the guerilla chief, Odysseus, in Trelawny's spirited presentation of him. In a delightful letter to Jane Williams, written from Tripolitza, on June 20th, 1824, he said: "I am as energetic as I was in boyhood—only pursuing a nobler quarry." He was not less youthfully precipitate than energetic. He misjudged Byron; he assumed the colours of a partisan and he lacked historical foresight in estimating the course of events.

### FAILURE IN GREECE

For this fallibility in judgment there was more than one cause. I have already described his furious desire to vindicate himself to Byron as one reason why he acted in Greece with a precipitancy that defeated its own ends. Had it not been for Byron, Trelawny would have acquitted himself less tumultously in the vertigo of events. By influence, again, of his roving commission under de Ruyter in the Indian Seas, Trelawny gravitated by training no less than by nature to a flying Left Wing action in the Greek War. His own independence was a *sine qua non* of his contribution to that of Greece. The bravura and deceptively bounteous personality of Odysseus, combined with his marriage to the chieftain's sister, bound him still more strongly to a sectional championship. Between the death of Shelley and the sailing of the "Hercules," again, his life, as the letters of this period bear witness, was oppressed by aimlessness and a profound dejection. Desolated and depolarised by the loss of his friend, bewildered by a new lack of confidence in himself, anguished by his sterile love for Claire, drifting inconsequently about the Mediterranean with Captain Roberts, moving from Genoa to Rome and then from Rome to Florence [1] and then via Leghorn back to Genoa again, he welcomed Byron's definite invitation to join him on shipboard with an inward shout of relief. "My ardent love of freedom spurs me on to assist in the struggle for freedom. When was there so glorious a banner flying as that unfurled in Greece?" he wrote to Claire on June 27th, 1823, and when on board the "Hercules":

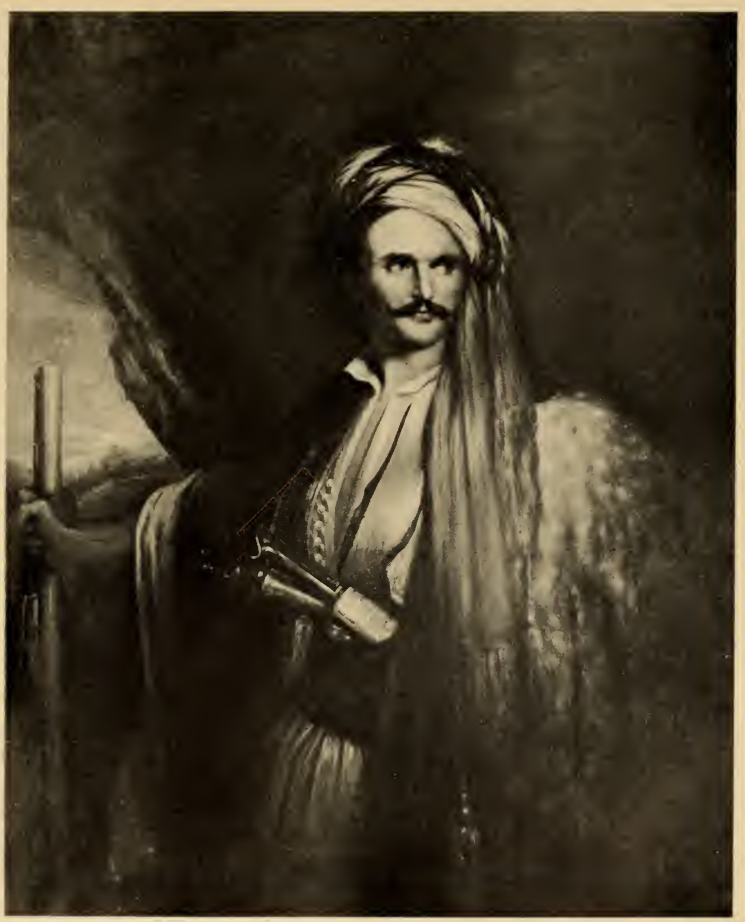
---

[1] It was here that Medwin urged him to write the Life of Shelley, saying, "You and Williams were his inseparable companions the last and most important year of his life. He loved Williams, but Williams died with him. I was at Naples; you alone did all that could be done to the very last, he liked you exceedingly from the first of his seeing you; your enthusiasm and unselfishness charmed him."

> Sweet Love, I am again forth—heaven knows where to stop—engaged deeply in a cause that I feel secured of your approving—to risk my life and fortune, which, however insignificant, are all my possessions. . . . I have no other prospect or excitement (whatever others may) but the Cause.

To show Byron what he was made of was part of that cause, but that he did not realise. He jumped from a life in which he had "been dying piecemeal" to one that transformed him "into the most active, bustling, useful fellow you ever saw." "Lord B and myself are extraordinarily thick, we are inseparable," he goes on, and you can guess how his eyes flash, his heart bounds, his quill gallops over the page as he writes. When the ship reached Argostoli, he was in such a taking to be up and doing that he turned on Byron with a loud whinny of impatience at what he conceived were his dilatory negotiations and temporising with the situation, and, procuring semi-official dispatches from him, shot off with Hamilton Browne to Tripolitza, the capital of the Peloponnese.

He could not endure to put his unhoused free condition into circumspection, and with a head full of "hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach," "of antres vast and desarts idle, Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven" traversed a country ravaged by war and habited only with gaunt armed shepherds, attended "by packs of the most savage dogs I ever saw." On he went from Tripolitza to Argos and then Corinth, winding with his mule-pack through the



E. J. TRELAWNY

FROM A PAINTING BY SEYMOUR KIRKUP FORMERLY IN THE POSSESSION OF MR. JOHN TEMPLE-LEADER

defiles of Dervenakia where the year before an Ottoman force had been ambushed and "slaughtered like droves of cattle," and five thousand skeletons were heaped upon the barren ground.

At Corinth, he met Colocotronis and the other insurgent chiefs, and Trelawny found them more congenial than the members of the provisional government at the Isle of Salamis, busy with accusing each other of embezzling the public funds. The air reeked of intrigue; envenomed feuds exploded almost daily and an honest man was a curiosity in this den of political quacks, timeservers, thieves and larcenists invested in a little brief authority. He shook himself free of all these cunning commotions and sailed for Hydra where he executed his commission of sending deputies, accompanied by Hamilton Browne, to England, for the purpose of launching a loan.

Trelawny returned to Greece and went on to Athens where he fell in with Odysseus. An unpublished letter written to Hunt from the Isle of Hydra and dated October 25th, 1823, describes some of his sight-seeing at Athens. Characteristically enough, he was more impressed by the Palace of Timon than any ancient building with the exception of the Temple of Minerva:

> I must confess I waxed a little sentimental on stoping (*sic*) at the foundation stones of an old house and being told it was called the Palace of Timon. I got off my horse—sat down—pictured the Princely Timon in all his splendour, surrounded by his sycophants—his reverie—gazed at the Town—saw the gate which he rushed out of, after having assayed his heartless friends—his Curses on his country—the woods in the distance to which he retired—saw him with his spade digging rootes and finding gold; herd (*sic*) the shrill trumpet and noisy drum with the Royal banner

> of Alcibiades as he breaks in upon him—and then, turning to the sea—imagined him having scooped his shallow grave and written his mournful epitaph—resigning himself to his death—and heard the curling and mournful waves encircling and washing over him,—this final scene connecting itself with the recent more affecting and heart-rending one of Via Reggio—made the ruin of Timon's house more interesting to me than the temple and columns which were scattered around.

Of the Temple of Minerva, he wrote in this same letter:

> Notwithstanding the ravages which barbarians of all countries have made—the magazine of powder blown up under its roof in the time of the Venetian—the execrable and mercenary thief Elgin's devastation—the recent bombardment by the Greeks in which some hundred shots were thrown in and around it; and lastly the Turks who pulled down immense masses to extract the lead with which the shafts are cemented. Yet in the matchless beauty of its form—the perfection of its proportions—its dazzling columns—still so perfect that many of their shafts appear of one entire mass—the materials of which it is built and the majestic rock on which it is situated—leave it the sublimest ruin in the world.

With Odysseus he plunged into one guerilla expedition after another:

> our ambuscades, onslaughts, rock-fighting, forays, stalking Turkish cavalry, successes and failures, intermingled with conferences, treaties, squabbles, intrigues and constant change, were exciting at the time . . . but as they are neither edifying nor amusing to write nor to read about, I shall not record them.

In January, 1824, hearing that Byron had arrived at Missolonghi, Colonel Stanhope was in Athens and the loan was being realised, he urged Odysseus to return to Athens. There the famous Congress of Salona was planned,[1] and Trelawny had travelled two days through the mountain passes on his way in person to invite Byron and the chiefs of Western Greece to attend it, when a messenger crossed his calvacade at the ford of the Evvenus, bringing the news of Byron's untimely death. He hastened to the "dismal swamp" of Missolonghi, and henceforward the gap in the letters between the "Hercules" voyage and Byron's end is closed.

### IN THE TAIL OF THE COMET

Though Trelawny wedded the wrong party equally with the wrong lady in Greece, how could it well have been otherwise? When Shelley perished, his surging energies lost form and content as Byron's distracted ones gained them the moment he was caught up in the flame of his saving resolution. His true romantic temper lost the formative pattern which his intimacy wtih Shelley had given him the chance for delineating for himself. The primal creative urge was there all right, Trelawny never lost it, but the prospect of shaping and unifying it constructively was abruptly withered. Byron, too, had crumpled him up and a reaction of introspective cross-currents set in, mirrored by a blur in external activity. From such futility Greece of course might have been a rescue. But the rebound to the hope of a positive renewal was too furious, and no sooner had Trelawny fairly landed in Greece than he found himself tangled in a net of circumstance from which only a serene and integrated purpose like Byron's could have freed him.

The whole of the Greek episode in Trelawny's life leaves the impression of a man fatalistically controlled, whirled hither and thither in the confusions of that circumstance. The part that Byron played, brief as it was, conveys the opposite meaning. It was steadfastly articulate; it put forth a quality of power to inform and resolve the discords of chaos and it was saying in its own way, "let there be light." What Byron did in Greece seems to us now the best and wisest thing that could have been done because his heart and mind were in concord. Though his efforts were swallowed up in the turmoil of civil vendetta that succeeded them, and his own life was sacrificed to them, one never feels the impotence of those efforts. Byron had become the master of his own life and was going forward in consequence to the mastery of circumstance. But Trelawny was swept away in the spate of events, and all his chivalry, his enthusiasm, his strength of action, his natural bias for the noble and disinterested, his very incorruptibility availed him nothing. And that was partly because the Greek War was something other than a cause for him; it was also a maelstrom in whose roar of waters he hoped to recover his stricken pride from the demolishments of Byron and to deaden his stricken heart from the death of Shelley.

---

[1] If the wily Odysseus was planning the virtual abduction of Byron as has been suggested, I doubt that Trelawny was privy to it. He never saw through Odysseus.

At Missolonghi, Trelawny occupied himself with taking down particulars from Byron's valet, Fletcher, of his last illness, settling his affairs and examining his papers with Count Gamba who had accompanied the expedition from Genoa, negotiating with Mavrocordato about the Salona Conference and contending with him about the distribution of the loan. He wrote to Colonel Stanhope, persuading him to consign part of the stores and half of the artillery brigade under Byron's control to the needs of Eastern Greece. Stanhope, who wrote to

Trelawny from Salona on May 1st, congratulating him on the success of his mission in Missolonghi and recommending him to seek out Napier at Zante to discuss the affairs of Greece, appears to have agreed to this suggestion, which Mavrocordato, supported by Blaquière who had arrived at Zante with the first part of the loan, resisted. The division between the fox and the lion came to an open breach, and Trelawny with a "motley squad" of brass artillery, horses and mules and a guard of 100 men brandished himself out of Missolonghi to Salona, where he met Stanhope.

Before leaving, he wrote to Mary, "I am transformed from the listless being you knew me to one of all energy and fire. Not content with the Camp, I must needs be a great diplomatist, I am again, dear Mary, in my *element,* and playing no *second* part in Greece." This naïve peacocking was of course just the secondary element in Trelawny that appealed to Mary and was given intensive culture not only by the melodrama of the Greek theatre of war but the death of Byron which had filched the entire stock of laurel leaves away from him. At that moment the blessed man was just about as good at diplomacy as Mary at Lerici was good at being alone with nature, on which she preened herself with a languishing abandon as "amusive," Gilbert White would say, as the Trelawnyan gusto. "I have just learned," wrote Mavrocordato to Blaquière, between May 10–22, "that Mr. Trelawny is quite enraged against me. . . . I laugh at his rage." That "I have just learned" is characteristic of that disingenuous statesman, but Trelawny's meteoric diplomacy might well have excited such a comment.

Trelawny, as we have seen, had perspicuity into human character, but he was not on such sure ground when he was engaged, soul and arm, in some passionate crusade. Mavrocordato was very possibly all that Trelawny believed of him as a man, though it must not be forgotten that after Shelley had met him in Italy, he dedicated, as Leigh Hunt records, his *Hellas* to him. And Shelley, though he did not express them with the thunderbolt and graphic abundance of a Trelawny, was little fallible in his judgments. This is not the place to reconstruct the tangled history of the years 1824 and 1825 in Greece, but I hardly think that any zealot in the cause of freedom, reviewing the claims of Odysseus and Mavrocordato, could doubt that Shelley and Byron were right and Trelawny was wrong. Had Trelawny flung himself into the Italian revolt, as he so easily might have done had it taken place when he was a younger man, Garibaldi would have been his Odysseus and Cavour his Mavrocordato. Unscrupulous and Jesuitical by nature as the latter was, that he was in the circumstances the only man after Byron's death who could have saved Greece is one of the less dubious verdicts of history.

Odysseus, for all his gallantry, magnetism and enterprise, was a guerilla chieftain of a familiar and self-interested pattern; Mavrocordato, the circuitous politician of unification. Trelawny was right enough in a better than a political sense. Small nations, redeemed from the oppressor, usually develop a power of despotism over their own subjects more sweeping than that exercised by the evicted alien, and if Mavrocordato's Government had not trapped Odysseus, taken him to the Acropolis, imprisoned him in a tower, tortured him to disclose his treasures, and then strangled and flung him from his Tarpeian rock, he might have done good service in preserving the idea of independence in an independent nation.

So Zella died and then Shelley and then Odysseus, and Trelawny's springs passed once more into the bitterness of underground. Byron had no such outrages against the generosities of the heart to meet. Death for him was the crowning peace of his redemption, the healing up of all futilities, not the treachery of a new wound in the crusader's back.

Out of Missolonghi with a whole skin Trelawny again joined arms with Odysseus, whom in the same letter to Mary he had called "a gallant soldier, and a man of most wonderful mind, with as little bigotry as Shelley, and nearly as much imagination; he is a glorious being." It is easy to understand why he visited Odysseus with this temporary idolatry. He was the ideal figure for the particular conditions in which Trelawny found himself and in the particular light he regarded them; his temporary honesty redeemed the campaigns from the rapacities and perfidies that accompanied them and his pictorial qualities from the meanness and squalor that underlay them. He served as a painted screen to hide Trelawny from himself and the miserable facts that cumbered his would-be dashing footsteps. And he sorely needed an image in dazzling costume to set up in the vacant niche, to fill the void left by the blastings of Byron and the passing of the most vitalising being he had ever known. Not that Odysseus whose calculating policy Trelawny failed to realise filled it any too badly; he was the best stop-gap to keep out the wind of desolation. But it serves as a measure of the unreality into which Trelawny had inevitably fallen alike through his bereavement, his loss of self-confidence and the phantasmagoria of the Greek War, that he should have thus compared Odysseus with Shelley.

It is impossible to deal chronologically with Trelawny's adventures after he left Missolonghi. In the autumn of 1824 he was at Argos, where he wrote a letter to his brother (not published in Buxton Forman's edition of the *Letters*):

> The Town is nothing more or less than a chaos of ruins, not a house inhabitable. The fever is making great havoc, people actually falling down in the streets. The stench of the place is so great I am obliged to remove my quarters to the once famous Argos, not more than an hour's walk from Agamemnon's tomb.

But between Missolonghi and Argos, he was at Mount Parnassus.

### MARRIAGE WITH THE SISTER OF ODYSSEUS

It was apparently not long after Byron's death on April 19th, 1824, that Trelawny, after leaving Missolonghi, cemented his alliance with Odysseus by marrying his sister, Tersitza Kamenou, a child of twelve or thirteen, probably at the famous Cave on Mount Parnassus, the chieftain's stronghold.

Trelawny is exasperatingly reticent about all his three marriages, though free enough in his views of the servile horror of marriage. In *The Adventures of a Younger Son,* he compares the gentle winds of a calm at sea to a lover's voice, very different from "the simoom of marriage." "Marriage," he said in a letter to Claire, written early in 1870, "is only suitable for stupid people," and of his marriage to Julia Addison in 1813, he wrote, also in the *Younger Son:*

> The fatal noose was cast around my neck, my proud crest humbled to the dust, the bloody bit thrust into my mouth, my shaggy mane trimmed, my hitherto untrammelled back bent with a weight I could neither endure nor shake off, my light and springy action changed into a painful amble—in short I was married.

"Relate my actions in India," spoke de Ruyter to the Younger Son, "with the open and fiery spirit which freedom gives, not in the subdued tone of a shackled, careworn and spirit-broken married man of the civilised West."

Writing in the *Recollections* of Byron's shameless marriage, he declared: "Within certain degrees of affinity marriages are forbidden; so they should be where there is no natural affinity of feelings, habits, tastes or sympathies."

The man who held such explosive views throughout a period conspicuous in the moral history of Europe for the cruelties and oppressions of its marriage institutions has given us no personal light upon his own experiments in the stricken field. Trelawny's only reference to his marriage to Tersitza occurs in a letter to Claire written from London in March, 1836:

> Did I ever tell you that her mother [he is speaking of his daughter, Zella] some years back married the son of one of the Greek chieftains—and is thriving—still young (22) and distinguished for her beauty—after going thro' the forms prescribed by the Greek Church—of being divorced from me (the unworthy). . . . In Greece and Turkey—particularly in the former—a mutual consent is sufficient cause of divorce—without the degradation of pains and penalties heaped on the weaker head;—a mistake here in the way of marriage is fatal—there is a transitory evil—easily remedied—and as we are not all gifted with fore-

> casting minds—this is wise;—we can only gain wisdom by experience—who can profit by the experience of others—in making such an innocent and natural experiment as marriage?

This broken and wandering method of expression is highly characteristic of Trelawny's epistolary style. He wrote what came into his head, and if the sentences lagged behind the thought and had to be roped together as they staggered over the rocky knolls and down the steep declivities of his rushing mind, so much the worse for them!

Mr. Trelawny Irving has told me the true reason for the divorce which I will quote in his own words:

> The marriage came to an early and abrupt end. Trelawny, as he has made clear in *The Adventures of a Younger Son,* greatly preferred picturesque national costumes to the conventional dress of his own country. Tersitza, a young woman with a certain position in Society, considered it only fitting that she should wear Paris creations, and on this point a serious difference arose. Finally, Trelawny pronounced an ultimatum. Tersitza had beautiful hair, red gold in colour, of which she was very proud. This Trelawny threatened to cut off if he ever found her wearing any but her national dress, and the threat, for a time, was effective. But affairs called him from home, and Tersitza took advantage of his absence to give a party and to wear at it a Paris frock. Trelawny returned unexpectedly while the party was in progress, and when it was over, he reminded her of his threat. Taking her tresses in his hand, he severed them, with his dagger, close to her head. She neither flinched nor shed a tear. Touched by her courage, he relented. "If I had known you would take it like that, little woman, I should not have done it." But he had met a spirit as resolute as his own. The next day Tersitza left him, and, through her brother, took steps to procure a divorce.

The only portrait we have of Tersitza occurs in the sixth volume of Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*,[1] where the Figures Conversant are Odysseus, Acrive his mother, Tersitza and Trelawny, posed above a precipice on Mount Parnassus. Tersitza there is the fresh-limbed Oread all of a wonder and a wild surmise at the dark stranger-knight whose chivalry is dedicated to her brother's cause. The actual events that followed this lifeless and marmoreal prelude are however related by Mr. Nicolson. When Trelawny left Parnassus for Cephalonia in 1826, he took his wife with him and a daughter was born in the June of 1826. She died a few months later. Meanwhile, Trelawny had quarrelled with Tersitza whom he immured in a convent. As a final act of revenge against her, he sent her in a little box the dead body of their daughter. "I am aware," remarks Mr. Nicolson in a footnote, "that this story has been authoritatively contradicted. It was, however, recently confirmed to me by Mr. Woods of Patras, who had received it direct from his great-uncle, Mr. Charles Hancock."

Did Mr. Nicolson originally get his story from William Sharp's *Life and Letters of Joseph Severn* (1892)? In that volume occurs the following extract from a letter of John George Cooke to Severn's son, written on June 29th, 1878:

> As touching your request to write any news of Trelawny, "Pirate" Trelawny, or others connected with Byronic, Shelley or Keats Period . . . Trelawny—if he were 14 at the battle of Trafalgar which he missed seeing owing to the supineness, as it has been stated of his Admiral, Duckworth . . . must now be 87 years old—is, I believe, very hale and strong . . . your father will remember that when

---

[1] Edited by Charles J. Crump. Dent, 1901.

Trelawny was in Greece he lived *maritalement* with a daughter (*sic*) of the great Greek Chief, Odysseus, in the Morea, and she had a child by him. When Trelawny left Greece for Italia he took this child with him. Months afterwards the Odysseus family was made aware of the certainty of not seeing this respected son-in-law again, and wrote to him begging that the child might be sent back. A long time passed, and at last comes a letter to say if the Chief Odysseus or his representative would come across on a certain day to the Custom House at Zante, the child should be forthcoming. A *scamparia* was dispatched and away went some of the Odysseus family to Zante. The Custom House authorities could give no account of any child, but they stated that a box had arrived *via* Corfu, which it was much wished should be removed by the Greeks, as it smelt offensively. Whereupon the box was delivered and opened, and a child's body, dead some weeks, appeared; whether any invoice or remarks by Trelawny accompanied it I never heard. The child had died, and he took this grim and savage way of ridding himself of all connection with the Odysseus circle.

There are in Trelawny's letters and elsewhere some scores of references to the movements, character and fortunes of the innocent agent of his *macabre* revenge. The child rose out of the box, but Mischief was stronger and forstalled her; nourished on her decomposing remains, it assumed a robustious life which has lasted into the publication of Mr. Nicolson's biography in our own age.

The story itself is the more inexplicable from the fact that Trelawny wrote to Severn himself from Ancona on June 21st, 1829, requesting him to make "application to the proper authorities at Rome to commute the period of quarantine which my little daughter Zella will otherwise be condemned to pass in the Lazaret here—on her arrival from Corfu—from whence I expect her hourly on board an Ionian vessel." The little corpse was then three years old and her father objected, in a letter to the Rev. Robert Finch, to her "graceful robes of the Greek girl" being changed for "the unseemly doll-like shreds and patches of the European." Both Claire and Kirkup the artist took a hand in unwrapping the cere-cloths from the poor little body slain by gossip and educating the mind within towards a virile ghosthood.

How then did this sinister version of Trelawny's Italianate vengeance creep through the nineteenth century? By a very cruel distortion of the original facts, which have been related to me by Mr. Trelawny Irving, the great-nephew of the martyred babe. I am careful to relate them verbatim as he gave me them:

> In order to secure herself against intrusion by Trelawny, Tersitza went to reside in a convent. She was enceinte when she entered, and in due course, her second child was born there. As it was contrary to the rules of the Convent to rear a child within its walls, the Mother Superior had the infant packed in a basket and sent it to Trelawny who was living in the neighbourhood. Trelawny, feeling that the proper place for a new-born baby was with its mother, promptly returned the basket. The Mother Superior inflexibly refused to accept it, and it was again brought to Trelawny, who, on opening it, found the child dead. Whether he sent the corpse back to the Convent, I do not know, but I think it extremely probable that he did so with some scathing observations. The sex of this child was not known to my Grandmother, and probably was not known to Trelawny, who doubtless told her the story.

It was not the Pirate, the leveller, the jacobin, the anarchist, the infidel and enemy of society who was responsible for the unhappy child's death, but the head of a devout and endowed organisation, hedged with the formal protection of that society. It was a pity that Mr. Nicolson, whose brilliant dramatic sense should not blind one to his biographical trustworthiness, should have lent his name not only to this flimsy slander but another to follow it.

### PASHA TRELAWNY

On October 24th, 1827, Trelawny wrote to Mary from Zante:

> You err most egregiously if you think I am occupied with women or intrigues, or that my time passes pleasantly. The reverse of all this is the case; neither women nor amusements of any sort occupy my time, and a sadder or more accursed kind of existence, I never in all my experience of life endured.

It is easy to understand why Mary implicitly believed the slander about Trelawny's harem in Athens, which I shall now have to pry into. Mary did no doubt see her husband's friend as a child of nature. But what was her conception of nature? Nature to her as to all of her type was a brutal, violent and rapacious force that civilised standards reduced to order, her order, and Trelawny's harem would be a characteristic expression of that force. She misjudged Trelawny, seeing him on his actable side only, and harem-collecting would fit in with her idea of what a wild man would do. And so when it was bruited abroad by Gamba and Millingen that Trelawny had purchased a set of houris for his delectation, she made no attempt to examine the story's credentials.

Here is the story itself. The extract about the harem occurs in Dr. Millingen's *Memoirs of the Affairs of Greece . . . with Various Anecdotes relating to Lord*

*Byron and an Account of his last Illness and Death* (1831).

Dr. Julius Millingen had been sent out to Greece by the London Committee in charge of the medical stores supplied by the Society of Friends, and as Mr. Nicolson puts it, "to place his inexperience at the disposal of the Greek Government." The "tall, delicately-complexioned, rosy-cheeked, dandy boy of simpering and affected manners" joined Byron at Cephalonia, and his book is so full of picturesque inaccuracies that his recital leads off with a description of the view of Metaxata which is painted in as a purely imaginary background to the figure of Byron. He became notorious as Byron's physician in his last illness, when his incompetence may well have hastened his death. When Missolonghi was taken by Ibrahim Pasha in 1825, he deserted the Greeks and took service under Ibrahim. For fifty years he lived at the Porte, doctored five Sultans and married four wives, one of whom he treated with great cruelty.

> Now the Greeks love money [wrote Trelawny of him, in a passage of admirable invective]—they love women too; but gold is their idol—gold is dearer to them than the bright eyes of their mistresses, but out of 3,000 adventurers of all sorts and conditions, all serving for pay and plunder, one man alone was mercenary and base enough to abandon the cause in which he was engaged and for which he received pay . . . and that [asterisks] was Milligent, a self-styled Englishman, a professor of a science considered the most liberal . . . yet this [asterisks] comments, criticises and runs amuck with his scalpel, stabbing at honourable men.

This shoot of flame from the *ignis Trelawniensis* appeared in *The London Literary Gazette* on February

12th, 1831, whither Trelawny had fired it from Florence. The paper printed Trelawny's fusillade against Millingen but, in the manner of Mary Shelley, muffled the detonations with editorial cotton-wool. It indicated its "utter dissent" from certain of the passages by asterisks in their place, and that is why the one I have quoted is pollarded. "Let him disprove this [the harem slander]," he wrote, "or remain with the stigma of a branded liar. If he can prove a single syllable he has asserted against me, I am content to suffer the same fate." This is what Millingen actually did say:

> Arrived at Cephalonia, Trelawny discovered that Lord Byron was not romantic enough to be his companion, and he started in consequence for Peloponnesus, where having roamed in vain in quest of a hero, he passed over to Athens. There he met with Odysseus, and so powerful is the invisible force of sympathy, that, although they could not understand each other's language, they became in an instant, intimate friends.
>
> According to Trelawny, Odysseus was the personification of the *beau ideal* of every manly perfection, mental and bodily. He swore by him, and imitated him in his minutest actions. His dress, gait, air and address were not only perfectly similar, but he piqued himself even on being as dirty, having as much vermin, and letting them loose from his fingers in the same dignified manner as if sparing a conquered enemy. This ridiculous spirit of imitation was in other respects very useful to him; for it enabled him to endure the privations and hardships, inseparable from the Greek mode of warfare, with as much apparent indifference as his prototype; sleeping on the bare earth with a stone for a pillow, and, in one word, sustaining a total want of every bodily comfort. All this, however, was only when distant from Athens. On his return thither he found ample compensation for the toils of war in the enjoyments of a numerous harem.

> Nature [Milligen goes on] had given him a highly romantic countenance; his wild, haughty, unquiet, scintillating dark eye denoted his disposition to bold and extraordinary undertakings. In his manners and opinions he seemed to have taken Anastasius for his model; and, to judge from his lofty language he had a mint of phrases as rich as Don Adriano de' Armado . . . although . . . as Lord Byron observed of him, "he could not, even to save his life, tell the truth," his narrations were so interesting, that, whether true or untrue, one could not but listen to them, with as much pleasure as to the wonders of an Arabian tale.

On August 22nd, 1824, Mary wrote to Leigh Hunt from Kentish Town as follows:

> Poor Pierino is now in London, *Non fosse male questo paese,* he says, *se vi vedesse mail il sole.* He is full of Greece, to which he is going, and gave us an account of our good friend, Trelawny, which was that he was not at all changed. . . . When he first came to Athens he took to a Turkish life, bought twelve or fifteen women, *brutti nostri,* Pierino says, one a Moor, of all things, and there he lay on his sofa, smoking, these gentle creatures about him, till he got heartily sick of idleness, shut them up in his harem, and joined and combated with Ulysses. . . .

It will be observed that Pierino puts the dalliance before the fighting, while Millingen puts the fighting before the dalliance. Millingen had apparently seen Trelawny once only, when the latter visited his sick bed. Pierino makes his statement before going to Greece and the origin of his information is not given. It may be noted also that at the date of Mrs. Shelley's letter, 22nd August, 1824, Trelawny had been but eleven months in Greece. At the end of April, 1824, he writes to Mrs. Shelley of Odysseus: "We have been inseparable now for eight months—fought side by side." There would seem to have been little leisure for the antecedent otiosity described by Pierino. Moreover, according to Mrs. Shelley, Trelawny left for Greece with £50 only in his pocket.

Evidently Millingen's Trelawny is just the kind of man who *would,* when relaxed from Ares, seek the couch of Aphrodite in as Oriental a setting as possible. Just the kind of de Rougemont, too, who appeared on the retina of Mary's languishing eye. Unfortunately, the Pirate's great-grandson suggested to me the true bearings of this canard. Trelawny did buy some wretched slave-girls in Athens, not to reserve for his private use, but simply to rescue from their harsh conditions, as, years later, he rescued a negro slave in the Southern States of America. I have nothing but Mr. Irving's word for this; but he had it from his grandmother, Zella, who was her father's confidant.

Before I was enabled through this generous intervention to scotch this harem libel, it had struck me as an episode totally at variance either with the temperament or the character of Trelawny. A man who buys women for his private delectation, whether one or a suite of them, is much more likely to be a respectable householder or a repressed moralist or a cold-blooded self-seeker or a calculating epicurean of the genus tabulated in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses,* men as faithful to the conventions as Byron's Regency beaux, than a man of Trelawny's *au fond* passionate simplicity. Harem buying was as foreign to Trelawny's true nature as understanding Shelley was to Mary's artificial one, for the simple reason that no man who looks at life imaginatively from within can possibly be a trader in gallantry, who sets all spontaneous feeling at defiance. Trelawny was not in the least of the type of the frigid voluptuary; the last thing his passions needed was artificial stimulation, nor could they have endured the coloured water of venal loves as a substitute for the vintage of reality.

How then did the harem canard originate, for it is a safe rule that no bearing of false witness, however malformed, distorted and basely intended, is devoid of foundation? Foul may become fair, or fair foul on the lips of men, but something is not the child of nothing. It is possible then that the following letter to Trelawny from Colonel Napier, dated August 2nd from Cephalonia (1826?), and printed in the *Records,* points to the fount and origin of Mary's and Millingen's evil-speaking:

> Some poor Cephaloniste Greeks here have made up sixty dollars to ransom three women, or rather two and a child, who were taken at Missolonghi, and are now at Patras. I send you their names, and pray you to speak to Mr Green, our Consul at Patras, to endeavour to get these poor females ransomed; and tell him, rather than he should fail, I will add forty dollars, and so make up the 100; but, I know they are sold at about ten or twenty dollars a-piece generally.

It is possible that some earlier transaction of this kind, of which Napier had knowledge, was the seed-bed of the slander.

### THE CAVE OF ODYSSEUS

As shown by a letter from Trelawny to George Finlay, the historian of Greece, first published in an article "Odysseus and Trelawny" contributed to *Scribner's Magazine* in 1897, our warrior was on his way to the Cave of Odysseus on Mount Parnassus not long after writing to Mary on April 30th, eleven days after Byron's death and shortly before leaving Missolonghi.[1] On May 26th, he entered the citadel of his Bolivar "with a splendid suit." Here, while Odysseus conducted the war in the Morea against Mavrocordato and the Government, or, as his lieutenant put it, against "a Prince of Hell armed with a chest of gold," he mounted guard with the family of Odysseus and a Greek, an Albanian, a Hungarian, an Italian, an old priest, two Greek boys, the Scotsman Fenton and his accomplice the Englishman Whitcombe, and a magnificent Thessalian hound who

> did the duty of a guard of soldiers, patrolling the corner terrace at night, and keeping watch at the guard-room door by day. He would not enter a room. He was best pleased in the winter snow-storms, when the icicles hung on his long brindled hair and shaggy mane. It was impossible to elude his vigilance or corrupt his fidelity; he would not take food from any other hands than mine or the Albanian's and could not be bribed. This is more than I could say of any Greek that I had dealings with during the three years I lived amongst them.

Trelawny, wrote Mary in April, 1825, "is in the cave of Odysseus, not in Polypheme's cave, but in a vast cavern of Parnassus; inaccessible and healthy and safe, but cut off from the rest of the world." That Cave now possesses a reputation hardly less than Dido's.

> Not all the caverns in the world [proclaimed the *Athenæum* of May 4th, 1878]—not the cavern of the Seven Sleepers—not the caverns of the Arabian Nights and of Victor Hugo, could by combining their marvels have been set up as rivals to this cavern in one of the precipices of

---

[1] See p. 263.

Mt. Parnassus, at an elevation of a thousand feet above the plane, which Odysseus had, with great ingenuity, managed to convert into a place of safety.

The only mode of access was by three ladders, the first braced against the face of the rock, the second resting on a projecting crag and the third, leading to a trapdoor which was the portal of the vaulted guard-room, standing on a ledge of the splintered limestone. The broad terrace was reached through the guard-room, and a high one, spanning the arch of the cave almost at its apex, was climbed by steps cut in the rock. Grottoes and a smaller cave grouped about the great cave were used as storehouses and magazines. If the ladders of this natural cathedral, with its spring of purest water filtering down from the snow-line, were removed, it was impregnable to naked human force, though not, as the event proved, a defence more than any other place, even the depths of the sea, to human guile.

The small military force encamped at the foot of the ladders was commanded by Fenton whose tale was that he had come out expressly to join Byron's regiment. Trelawny, unsuspicious like all generous natures, befriended him and carried him off with him from Missolonghi to Parnassus. This "tall, bony man, with prominent eyes and features, dark hair and long face," with whom Trelawny, as with others he warmed to, shared his purse, was sent by him on various missions to the Ionian Isles for money, to the seat of government to see what was toward and to the chiefs friendly to Odysseus. "No querulous word or angry glance ever ruffled our friendly intercourse."

Before Fenton, who was probably in the pay of Mavrocordato and the Government for the object of assassinating his protector, had made his attempt, Trelawny in December 1824 left the Cave to meet Odysseus on the report reaching him that his chief was conferring with the Turkish leaders.

Mr. Nicolson roundly accuses him "at least by implication" of deserting to the Turks, as Millingen ultimately did. How a man can be a deserter by implication is not explained. The rupture between Eastern and Western Greece was in no sense Trelawny's fault. After the Conference at Salona had dispersed, the civil strife between the Western Government and the military chiefs came to a head; the chiefs seized the territory they had wrested from the Turks on

> The good old rule, the simple plan
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can,—

while Odysseus retired into the mountains, leaving Trelawny in charge of his cavern-citadel. It was this rupture between the two parties which caused Odysseus, while his follower was brooding in his eyrie, to open negotiations with Omer Pasha of Negropont. For the Government sought to deprive him of his command in Eastern Greece. When Trelawny got wind of this, he left Parnassus in a snow-storm, and, crossing the Sperchius on an Arab horse, joined Odysseus the next day at the town of Livadia. He represented to Odysseus that he had made a fatal step in agreeing to a three months' truce with the Turks, and urged him to escape to Parnassus. It is practically certain that he himself had nothing whatever to do with the armistice. He was occupied in his absence from Parnassus in scheming with an English Major he met at the Turkish Camp at

Talanta in February in company with Odysseus how to spirit the Greek chief from the nearest port to the Ionian Isles so as to safeguard him from the perilous position in which he was involved. The plan, however, failed and Trelawny returned to his mountain fastness.

In April (1825), Odysseus sent a message to him calling upon him to capitulate, which Trelawny refused to do. That same month, Odysseus was defeated by the Government at Daulis, captured, tortured and put to death. "Desertion" is hardly an apt term to describe a turn of events in which Trelawny himself had no voice, with which he had no contact and over which he had no control. These are not even straws of evidence; they are split hairs.

### FENTON'S CRIME

At the end of May or beginning of June, Trelawny, Fenton and Whitcombe, who had just arrived from campaigning with the Greeks in Bœotia, were smoking and drinking together after the noonday meal on the Corner terrace. Fenton proposed a shooting contest, and the moment after Trelawny had fired, Whitcombe, Fenton's musket missing fire, shot him in the back. Fenton protested it was an accident and fled with Whitcombe on the pretence of fetching aid. But the great hound, growling fiercely, stopped them—"he had the voice of a lion, and never gave a false alarm." This brought one of the bodyguard (the Hungarian) upon the upper terrace, whence he shot and killed Fenton. The dog sprang on Whitcombe who had made for the trap-door, "and held him as if he had been a rat." Shrieking convulsively and struggling frantically, he was trussed up to a crane and hoisted over the precipice.

Trelawny, utterly bewildered at the treachery of the two assassins, ordered the execution to be deferred until the prisoner had been examined. Chained to the wall in irons, he went temporarily out of his mind, gave an incoherent account of the plot between him and Iago and begged Trelawny to see him. On the twentieth day of his duress, Trelawny released him unconditionally with that magnanimity which was native to him and was indeed one of the bonds between himself and Shelley. After his release, he wrote to Trelawny: "That God may send you a speedy recovery, and turn every curse which falls upon my head into a blessing upon yours is the prayer of the wretched *W. J. Whitcombe.*"

In that same month (June 17th), "the lifeless body of Odysseus," to quote Gordon's *History of the Greek Revolution,* "was stretched at the foot of the tower that had been his prison . . . it was supposed that he had been strangled, and then thrown from the top of the Acropolis."

Though he gives no account of the second shot, Trelawny was twice wounded, once in the back, the ball lodging in his breast whence it was never extracted, and once through the neck, for some months paralysing his right arm. The ball dropped from his mouth with several teeth without wounding his face. In October, he wrote to Captain Roberts from Cephalonia with his "left fin":

> I have been damned near going down, two shots between wind and water, all my timbers carried smack away, standing and running, rigging cut up—to wit, two balls entered my back, broke my jaw, breast bone, cut all the nerves of my right arm, and in short all but did my business. After a two months' struggle between my constitution and these

severe wounds in which I suffered daily death, the former triumphed, since which time I have been daily gathering strength. . . . They [Fenton and Whitcombe] were instigated to undertake this assassination for a considerable sum of money, to be paid on delivering up the fortress I was holding for General Ulysses, the Greek Chieftain. After being wounded, I continued two months on Parnassus, and being under strict blockade, could procure neither doctor or medicine, so you may imagine what a host of evil I had to contend against. Whilst I was thus lingering on between life and death, Captain Hamilton [the first advocate, according to Finley, of the Greek cause among Englishmen], the senior officer in the Archipelago, heard of my perilous situation and twice sent to the nearest port of Embarkation a sloop of war, the "Sparrowhawk."

He goes on to relate how, on the second visit of the "Sparrowhawk," he was conveyed on board and towed both by the "Cambrian" and the "Zebra" to Cephalonia in the Ionian Isles, where he arrived in September.

This is a good example of Trelawny's minor carelessness in rivetting the smaller nuts and bolts of his narrative. Either the "Cambrian" or the "Zebra," not both, was his tug. He wrote to Claire in October of that year, saying he had been unable to write to her for eighteen months, five months too long in his reckoning. These loosenesses of phrase are paralleled by what he wrote to Bailey Saunders a year before his death: "Of Shelley there is neither portrait nor bust, and what artist could imagine him?" This from the man who fetched the Curran portrait from Rome for Mary, refers to it over and over again in his correspondence, twice published reproductions of the Clint portrait, tried to get Eastlake to paint Shelley's portrait and was grimly jocular about Mrs. Leigh Hunt's posthumous bust of the poet! All he meant by this sweeping statement—as

Buxton Forman justly points out—was "that there existed neither portrait nor bust of Shelley done from the life by an artist of repute." Amelia Curran's wretched painting in the National Portrait Gallery did not exist for him as a work of art. An even more likely explanation of a statement which, taken literally, he knew to be nonsense, was that every portrait and bust of Shelley was a shadow of the living man.

It is upon these and similar instances of a constitutional indifference to minutiae that critics have built the legend of Trelawny's inveterate untruth and incapacity for good faith. His very spontaneity and innocence of ulterior design have been his undoing. But the man who thus steeplechased over inessentials was one with a natural passion for the spirit of truth. His nature was entirely devoid of that element of calculation which makes the liar.

During the two to three months that Trelawny was prostrated by his wounds on Parnassus, he received no medical aid. For the first twenty days, he remained sitting and leaning against the rock, "determined to leave everything to nature." He did not even change his clothes; he refused to have his wounds examined and to be "bandaged, plastered, poulticed, or even washed," and kept himself alive on water and the yolk of eggs. Only after forty days, when the pain began to diminish, did he submit to being sponged with spirit and water and he had shrunk to eight stone in weight. His first real food was the raw ham of a wild boar, which he forced into his mouth notwithstanding the agony of moving his fractured jaw. "It spliced my bones and healed my flesh, except my right arm, which was shrivelled up and paralysed." There is something legendary, superbly mythical about such strength and hardihood.

It was through the offices of Hobhouse that Trelawny was rescued from Parnassus by Commodore Rowan Hamilton. An unpublished letter from a Mr. Humphrey to Hobhouse,[1] written from Zante on July 24th, 1825, describes how the writer visited the Cave from the Greek camp at Salona, and after spending the day with the wounded man, set off to procure a surgeon for him at Napoli: "I was there in a most unauthorised and infamous manner arrested by the Government for having attempted to aid my countryman and only to the arrival of English men-of-war did I owe my liberty." He sent a surgeon to Trelawny, but he was stopped either by the Greeks or the Turks, equally at enmity with our forlorn Troglodyte. A "Klephtes" (outlaw) surgeon, however, did contrive to reach him—"he made an incision under my breastbone, and poked with his finger to find the ball but in vain." Tersitza was with him all through the Parnassian period and accompanied him to Cephalonia in the "Zebra."

## DISILLUSION IN GREECE

Trelawny wrote both to Mary and Claire, who was now in Moscow, giving further accounts of how "Death seized me by the body and limbs—but relented ere his icy paw had touched my heart." He was still in Cephalonia up to the February of the next year and wrote to Leigh Hunt briefly describing the sweep of Ibrahim Pasha and his Arabs "deadly as the simoom of their own deserts" through the Peloponnese, leaving the Greeks with only three of their fortresses still standing. In April, he had removed to Zante and conveyed to John Hunt the news of the taking of Missolonghi. For five years, this "paltry fishing-town, floating on a mudbank," had, like the little Dutch towns among the dykes, resisted the might of an Empire. Now that spark was extinguished and Missolonghi followed Byron into the dust:

---

[1] Hobhouse's *Diary,* dated June, 1824, relates an incident (undated) of Trelawny's life in Greece, unrecorded by him. Lord J. Churchill, commanding "H.M.S. Hinde" at anchor off the Piraeus invited Trelawny, Odysseus and some thirty soldiers on board and made off to sea with them. They discovered the ship was in full sail in time, rushed on deck, drew their swords, cut the tiller ropes and halliards, jumped into the boats and made to shore. The "Hinde" had just come from Smyrna and it was believed that the attempt at kidnapping was the result of a large sum of money offered by the Turks for the head of Odysseus.

> The Garrison had been so reduced by famine as to feed upon human flesh for several days—part of them had not stomach for this and were starving—which state of things led to the resolution to set fire to the town; to this it seemed they added the terrible alternative of destroying all their women and children, which they effected by collecting them over a mine and exploding it! The Garrison then sallied out sword in hand.
>
> Of its ten thousand inhabitants [he wrote in May to Mary] I doubt that ten are living to tell the tragic story of their fate.[1] Yet surrounded by ruin and death the Greeks were never so far from being united as they are at this instant . . . their jealousy and hatred of each other seems to fill every bosom—and the sacred cause they armed in is forgot.

Trelawny himself was occupied in "saving some of the wretched Greeks by getting them to these Islands."

After a visit to Missolonghi in the "Zebra," where he found Byron's house the only one left standing,[1] looming "like a lonely column in the midst of a desert," he returned to Zante and in August told Mary how "the mad Greeks have just concluded another civil war" (the War of the Currants) and what gallantry they had shown in their battles for this fruit. In December, another letter to Mary is divided between railing at poverty "as the climax of human ill" and a melancholy resignation at the fate of Greece, whose "affairs are so bad that little can be done to make them worse." For ten months nothing more is heard of him, his health being occupied in fighting a succession of low fevers, and his depressed energies the "villainous law-suit" (see p. 193) which, whatever its origin, was so scandalously unlike him and makes his high talk that he "has not been a passive instrument of arbitrary despotism" and "will thus continue to follow my friends to wander some other planet—for I have nearly exhausted this" taste such very small beer in the mouth.[2]

---

[1] Trelawny also described the fall of Missolonghi in a letter to the *Examiner.*

On October 24th, 1827, he told Mary how the Egyptian fleet with part of the Turkish had been totally destroyed by the Allies at Navarino. It was the lowest ebb of his life. Shamed as he must have been by his wretched legal squabble, reduced in means and vitality, caught in conflicting minds as to what he should do with his life, bankrupt of ardent purpose, and contemplating a background blasted with war and heaped with the débris of hopes, ambitions and fruitless service, through which flitted the ghosts of his friends, little wonder that he was too "sick at heart" even to write to Claire.

---

[1] One of the most captivating passages in Mr. Nicolson's *Byron: The Last Journey*, is his reconstruction of this house.

[2] A letter from H. Robinson of Zante to J. A. Toole, the Deputy Collector of Customs at Corfu, says that the lawsuit was with his wife, whose family brought an action against Trelawny for, presumably, maintenance.

That Trelawny muddled both himself and his affairs in the Greek War seems to me the only relevant criticism upon them. To reply on the one hand that he acted upon impulse is no explanation of his losing his way in that jungle of events. Trelawny always acted upon impulse. That was both his nature and his power. It was when he attempted to exploit and window-dress those impulses, as he did for Mary's benefit, out of his fear of Byron, at times in Greece and in London society, that he went wrong with himself. But his impulses themselves were his wealth, his vitality and creative source of being. What he failed to do in Greece was to make the best use of that prodigality which was his virtue. He cast his bread with that bounty which is the entrance fee to the Kingdom of Heaven—but not upon the fructifying waters. To accuse him on the other hand of bad faith either to Byron or the Greek Government is an arbitrary denigration of the unpremeditated part he played in a welter wherein no man, excepting Rowan Hamilton, Napier, the maladroit Stanhope and Byron himself, was single-minded in the cause he professed.

He went with Byron to Greece not as his subordinate but his comrade-in-arms, and he parted from him because he failed to distinguish the new Byron from the old. He left him in a gesture of impatience at what he conceived was a reversion into his familiar hesitancy, evasion and dilatoriness, because he was wild to be off and fruitfully engaged, because he wanted to rehabilitate himself from Byron's mental swordsmanship and forget himself and the extinction of that translunary light upon earth which was Shelley and haunted him. Odysseus caught him up at a time in which he quivered to new impressions as a means of softening the ache of the old, and, throwing in his lot with this mountainy but slippery wilding, he found himself, by the accident of a dizzy fortune, in opposition to a Government whose dark circuitous policy had already disgusted him. He had some justification for fighting shy of it when it later suborned Fenton to murder both him and Odysseus. "There can be no doubt," writes Gordon, "that Mavrocordato was at the bottom of these tragical events, instigated fully as much by private revenge as care of the public weal." Trelawny would scarcely have quoted Gordon's own words in the *Recollections*: "Odysseus was undoubtedly a tyrant and a traitor, Trelawny in open rebellion, and suspected of tampering with the Turks, who were very anxious to get possession of the cave (viz. on account of the report of its fabulous treasures)," if he had dreamed of being uneasy at his own conduct. He was so isolated and beleagued that only the "Klephtes," nestling with the eagles, amongst the most inaccessible crags by day, and coming down with the wolves at night, supplied the garrison with provisions and kept them informed of what was taking place outside their microcosm. In such circumstances, he could not possibly have been entangled with Odysseus, negotiating with the Turks in the field. He merely left his eyrie to try and extricate the chief from the dangers that threatened him alike from Greeks and Turks. Trelawny's crusade in Greece was an heroic adventure from which the force of hectic circumstance rubbed out the adjective, and the Red Cross Knight returned from the battlefield like a dilapidated White one. His part in the grim pantomime was over. The nut he had cracked with such terrific sinew contained a little powder.

## § III

### LIFE AFTER GREECE

By the midsummer of 1828, a battered buccaneer was in England. It was only a flying visit, the most of it spent in Cornwall, his native land, throwing off a fresh bout of fever and revisiting friends and relatives who had given him up for dead. It is probable that he stayed with his mother at Trewithen but Trelawny believed that brevity was the soul of family relationships and by November he was in London. In the February of the next year he was once more on migration and after a leisurely journey by way of Paris, took up his quarters in March with Keats' friend, Charles Armitage Brown, in Florence.

### FLORENCE

Here he recovered both his spirits and himself. Hardly delaying to unpack his trunks, he flung himself into writing his autobiography with Brown and Landor as his literary advisers, editors and abetters. But his life was by no means all literature. His daughter, Letitia (Mrs. Call), told me that he was once walking by moonlight over the Arno, when the shadow of a dagger clasped in an outstretched hand appeared beside him. He instantly slewed round, threw his arms round his would-be murderer and flung him over the side of the bridge into the river. This sort of thing really did happen to Trelawny and so makes his self-dramatisations excusable. Nothing is known of his friendship with

Landor. When Colvin visited him in 1880, he was anxious to find out how Trelawny agreed with "that other stiff-backed and strong-lunged type of British independence and self-will" twenty-two years his senior, and what he thought of the highly idealised portrait of himself, Odysseus and Tersitza in the *Imaginary Conversations*. But all that Colvin could get out of him was "a remarkable man." The *Letters* are equally void. Mr. Nicolson says of Trelawny that during his spell of *fanfreluching* (as Gargantua aptly termed the disease) in London society, he "exploited his past intimacy with a man [Byron] whom he had so cynically deserted." Literary snobbery and parasitism were no more in his line than dandyism, robotry, place-hunting, ritual-mongering, clique-forming, aping your social betters or any other of the minor vices of civilised gentility. The trouble for the biographer of Trelawny is that he is so casual and sparing about his knowledge of the notables of his age or series of ages. He mentions a few if he happens to think of them but never meatily and with no more concern than if he were throwing pebbles on a beach.

Between 1829 and 1831, Trelawny's letters are full of his books, and of the projected life of Shelley which was to be his "tribute of my great love for the memory of Shelley, his life and moral character." Mary's obstructionist attitude to this darling ambition and her neglect to feed him with the documents for which he clamoured were no doubt responsible not only for the postponement of the *Recollections* for nearly another thirty years, but for their limitation of range. Meanwhile, the writing of the *Adventures of a Younger Son* indirectly ministered to the master devotion of his life and his buoyant letters to Mary about it fitly coincide with a renewed flow of references to Shelley. For a space the weight of all this unintelligible world was taken off him; he was himself again because he was in spiritual contact with the blaze of reality he had known a decade before and with that friend who accompanied him now on Sinbad voyages in the Indian Seas. A letter to Joseph Severn who had once called him "Byron's jackal," written from Ancona in June 1829, where he was awaiting the arrival of his daughter Zella from Corfu, gives the measure of his exuberantly baroque mood at this period. He wrote to congratulate Severn on his marriage—a year late:

> The mystery of Alchemy—the discovery of longitude—the Phoenix—the philosopher's stone, or the Duke of Milan with his enchanted Island—old Sycorax—Caliban—and the rest (I say do you mark me?) I have thought any or all of these were less difficult to find than a woman whom a husband—after a year's possession—really thought perfect—as I am told you do your Wife and have felt no compunctious visitings o' the conscience—or chew'd the cud of sweet—and bitter—memory of their days of freedom—well, I wish you joy; and thinking it worth a journey—though to the Antipodes—shall certainly make a pilgrimage to the shrine where you have garnered up your heart—as doubtless will others from the four quarters of this Vale of earth. Mecca, Loretto and the hoary temples of India will lose their wonted worshippers—and even St. Peter's toe be left green with mould—all worship being transferred to Mrs. Severn—and Shelley's creed of universal Love become the sole creed on Earth.

At this time too his vexed passion for Claire had descended into the sheltered valley. In 1831 he met her in Florence, looking miserable and thin and fifty, partly, as he conjectured, because she was chained to a family of bigots to whose religion she in the end succumbed. He wrote many feeling letters to her from Florence, commiserating her in the full sense of the term upon her hapless fortune. Here he exploded against Millingen; here, after finishing his book, apparently in the last month of 1830, he wrote to Mary: "I am now deeply engaged in a wild scheme, which will lead me to the East, and it is firmly my belief that when I again leave Europe, it will be for ever." This was to the "region where there is still standing the stone erected by Sardanapalus," but nothing came of it.

### ZELLA

At Florence, Zella, who was three years old when she arrived in Italy, lived with him in a house on the hills a stone's throw from the site of Galileo's. Zella, he wrote, "preserves me from the melancholy retrospection which would otherwise drive me mad," for a memoir of Trelawny must in all circumstances and through all the long toll of years be looking over the shoulder to the "handful of grey ashes" in Rome. Trelawny had an affection for Zella, great because it was founded upon an inward kinship between them which had nothing to do with their literal relationship, and precarious because that literal relationship happened to make the daughter a young tartar as formidable as her father. They both had minds of their own, the same kind of minds, and so ran well together so long as they did not clash. When they did clash, there were no survivors: they just parted. When Zella was very young, he took a strong pride in her beauty and liveliness: "My child Zella is growing up very pretty and with a soul of fire."

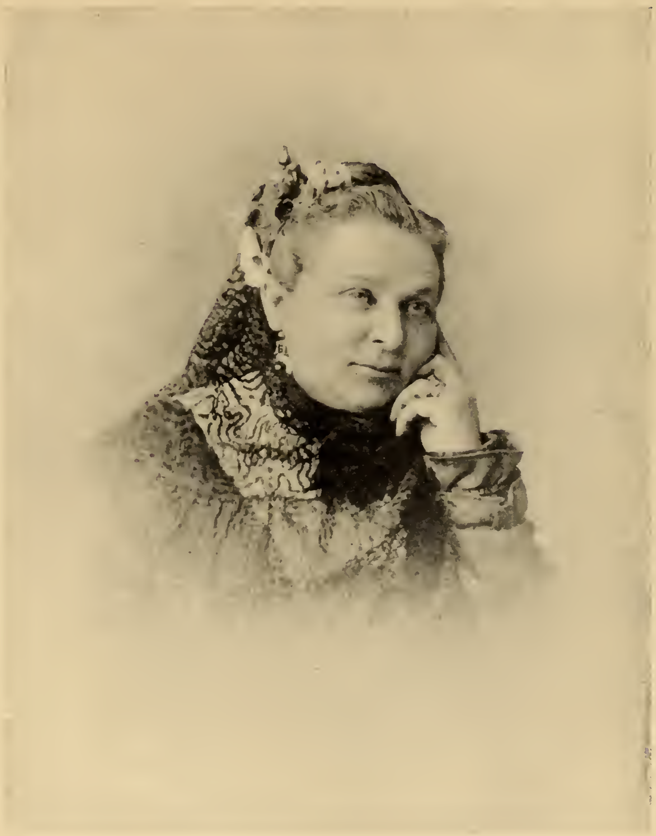
He brought her back to England with him at the end of 1831 or beginning of 1832 and before he went off to America entrusted her to Mary to rub down her wildness and teach her housekeeping.

Later the young colt was with Jane Boccella (see p. 247). I am indebted to Mr. Trelawny Irving for some interesting details about Zella's life with this lady:

> She was an Englishwoman belonging, I believe, to a Devonshire family, who had married an Italian Marchese. Owing to the fact that the Duke of Lucca of that date was without a wife to do the honours of his ducal court, the Marchesa, as the lady of highest rank in the Duchy, went to Lucca when the Court was sitting and performed the ceremonial duties of a duke's consort. The little Zella went with her, and informed me seventy years afterwards that she could distinctly remember sitting on the Duke's knee and pulling his ducal nose.
>
> She was, however, frequently neglected. Her nurse, Adeline, spent much of her time flirting with the lackeys of the establishment and the poor child was sometimes left the whole day unattended and without food. On one of these occasions, a gardener found her picking peaches from an espalier on the wall, and tied her hands behind her. She waited until the man's back was turned and then walked up to the espalier and ate what peaches she could reach with her mouth direct from the tree.

Jane kept him informed in America of her bursts of fury. He wrote to Claire in some concern:

> Can you not devise anything . . . from her babyhood she exhibited an affectionate disposition and strong passions —and these are the elements of our virtues—she certainly is not deficient in intellect—unfolding that is indispensable— yet some minds are as difficult to unroll as the Herculaneum MS.—and when laid open not worth the trouble of reading: by the bye all the women of our family are devils.



MRS. OLGUIN (ZELLA TRELAWNY)

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH IN THE POSSESSION OF MR. C. M. TRELAWNY IRVING

Zella remained with the Marchesa Boccella for some years. When her father returned, he wrote again to Claire, urgent for details: "Let me see—she must be of nine years old—is she tall or short, fat or thin, ugly or pretty,—clever or stupid?—I want the truth and nothing but the truth." Because her father detested "everything that has a resemblance to a School," Kirkup took up her education, surpassing in management, Trelawny said, any woman he had ever known, and on that account he left her with him. Shortly afterwards, so Mr. Trelawny Irving tells me, she was sent to school at Florence, but fell ill there and Trelawny had her back in England. Mr. Irving gives me these details of her journey:

> To the end of her life, my Grandmother kept a lively recollection of the long journey home by coach across the Continent. Somewhere in France she fell ill, and held up for ten days or a fortnight the large and distinguished party with whom she was travelling. To the little girl, the pilgrimage seemed interminable, but at last she arrived in London, where her father, who was living in chambers in Duke Street, St. James's, handed her over to Mrs. Shelley to be made presentable. Mrs. Shelley was living in Baker Street, and there Zella stayed while she was being fitted out with clothes. I remember her describing these clothes with great gusto some 70 years later, but the only detail I can recall is that they included a "Leghorn" hat. The little girl knew Leghorn, and was able to assure her guardian that no such hat had ever been seen there.
>
> In due course, Zella was taken to see her Grandmother, Mrs. Trelawny, who was a widow, and who lived in or near Knightsbridge. The old lady took a fancy to the child, and had her to live with her, but again Zella found her natural appetite frustrated. When no company was present, she was allowed to have her midday meal with her Grandmother. Impressed by this honour, she was on her best be-

haviour. When her Grandmother addressed her, she politely put down her knife and fork. When she put down her knife and fork, the flunkey behind her whisked away her plate!

But my Grandmother's most poignant recollection of this time was the daily drive. Round and round the Serpentine, the fashionable circuit in those days, in a yellow-bodied coach, the mark of a dowager, with a fat coachman sitting on a hammer cloth and two knee-breeched footmen hanging on behind, the old woman and the little girl inexorably proceeded for two hours every afternoon. Now and again the coach would stop while Mrs. Trelawny exchanged compliments with another dowager in another yellow-bodied coach. These conversations exasperated the little girl almost beyond endurance, and describing them when she was herself not far from the grave—"I could have spat on the old cats," said she with great vigour.

In 1837 she was with him in Cornwall: "Zella is well and clever and we agree amazingly well—perhaps because we so seldom meet—don't you like the absent best—they never ruffle one—those present—always present—we can't help daily wishing dead." To Augusta White he wrote: "We are as fond as Lyons and their cubs can be, sometimes interrupted by sharp growls and snarls—no further, we don't bite." That is Trelawny to a hair. How transparently honest, how shaggily alive Esau appears in these lightning aperçus!

The end of the Zella partnership, told me by Mr. Trelawny Irving, her grandson, is a melancholy one:

When Trelawny joined his friend, Mr. Temple-Leader, in a house on Putney Hill, he took his daughter with him, and she became his house-keeper when eventually he set up for himself in Town. Apparently they got on pretty comfortably together until Trelawny one day brought home Lady Vane Goring, wife of Sir Harry Vane Goring, with whom he had eloped. As the situation could not be regularised until a divorce had been procured by means of a private Act of Parliament, Zella, who was then in the early twenties, was sent under chaperonage on a Continental tour, and in Rome met a Mr Olguin, whom she shortly afterwards married.

She lived thenceforth a great deal abroad, but about 1870 the Olguins took No. 11, Hinde Street, Manchester Square, and after that they saw Trelawny occasionally. It was his practice to call on his daughter once a year and to present her with a cheque for £100, "pin money." On one of these occasions he turned up in a somewhat surly temper, and when my grandmother offered him a glass of wine, he declined it with a disparaging remark on the cellar of a man of no family. This incensed my grandmother so much that she incontinently rang the bell, and, on the appearance of the servant said, with great firmness: "Show Mr Trelawny out." As might have been expected, he never called at that house again, but it is characteristic of his attitude in money matters that, although he ceased his visits to his daughter, he transferred to her name sufficient capital to produce the amount of "pin money" which he had been in the habit of giving her.

Well, serve him right for such an outrage!

Zella's mother, Tersitza (I quote from Mr. Irving's account he sent to me)

became a widow at an early age and died at about 45 as the result of a chill contracted on a visit to her currant lands in Patras. She left no children by her second marriage, and her will provided that, if her daughter Zella could be found, her property should pass to her.

Zella was, however, at this time living in Rosario de Sante Fé, in the interior of the Argentine, and did not hear of her mother's death and testamentary dispositions until some years later, when she returned to England. Her husband then made a journey to Greece to see if the property could be saved, but he was unsuccessful. There was a provision in Tersitza's will that if her estate were not claimed by Zella within a certain time, it should pass to the Convent which had sheltered her in her youth, and my Grandfather was advised that any attempt to recover the property would be vain. He offered, for sentimental reasons, to buy back Tersitza's jewellery, but that had already been disposed of so he had to return to England empty handed.

Zella died on May 8th, 1906, aged 81, is buried in the Extra-Mural Cemetery at Brighton and has a perpetual angel in stone or marble hovering over her.

Little enough is known of the rest of Trelawny's children. His eldest daughter, Maria Julia, who was at least ten years older than Zella, married a John Burley of the Temple who, as Mr. Irving informs me, was with Shelley at Eton.

Of his three children by Lady Goring, Letitia, the youngest, married Lieut-Col. Call, R.E. in 1882 and lives at Valescure in the South of France. Both the two sons, Frank and Edgar, he outlived. Edgar he detested, not without reason. In John George Cooke's letter to Severn's son, written on June 29th, 1878, and already referred to for its scandal-mongering over the baby-in-the-box canard, this account of Edgar is given:

> He married some woman of quality and made himself rather conspicuous in England, representing himself as a convert to Romanism; that was true, but he added that he was the son of Sir John Salisbury Trelawny, the Pirate's cousin, which he certainly was not. He imposed himself upon Lord Denbigh and some other illustrious perverts; in the end he died rather suddenly.

Trelawny himself partly corroborates this in his letters to Augusta White, which have never hitherto seen the light. He warned Augusta against him when she

MRS. BURLEY (MARIA JULIA TRELAWNY)
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH IN THE POSSESSION OF MR. C. M. TRELAWNY IRVING

had removed from Bath to Montreal, where her descendants now live, as a "rogue," a "cunning fellow" and a "monster." "Return here he shall not with my consent and if he comes to England I will *not* see him. If you do see him read him this my opinion of him in which his mother joins." In another letter, he tells her how he "cajoled a Baronet's widow to marry him, Lady Constance with £4,000 a year and an immense deal of personal property." In a few months his wife left him. His second son, Frank, "suited me in all things," but died of consumption.

### AMERICA

In 1832 Trelawny was once more in England, stopping in Paris on the way. The Parisians he found "as capricious as fine ladies and never seem to have any settled purpose." He was himself now wandering in the bleached desert called "Aimlessness." In Paris, too, he passed the highly characteristic remark with which I have a profound fellow-feeling: "If I see a crowd all marching one way—I feel myself impelled to jostle through them in a contrary direction." The next year he was off to America, apparently with the Kembles. This was how Fanny described him:

> with a countenance habitually serene and occasionally sweet in its expression, but sometimes savage with the fierceness of a wild heart. His speech and movements were slow and indolently gentle, his voice very low and musical, and his utterance deliberate and rather hesitating; he was very tall and powerfully made, and altogether looked like the hero of a wild life of adventure.

The voice recommendation is curious, since most Trelawnian jottings tell us he had a voice like the Last

Trump. It could, however, be low when his feelings were not roused. In America, he lifted Fanny up in his arms to show her Niagara and the wonderfully vivid account of his swimming the river between the falls and the rapids is given in Appendix v. He was not happy in America, if we are to judge by the letter he wrote to Claire on December 10th, 1833, from Charleston, South Carolina. "You must grow weary of one wayward and worthless" and "I loathe myself—I have been in America a twelvemonth—during which period I have circumnavigated the twenty-four states." According to the Deed of Sale of an American negro whom Trelawny bought and released (see p. 246) at the beginning of 1834, he was, at any rate for a short time, owner or occupier of a plantation in Virginia. He travelled 2000 miles of the Mississippi, and 1500 miles of the Ohio, traversing league after league to escape from that purposeless self he took with him, for the American journey cannot be dignified as other than a pointless escapade. Once again his sense of polarity was lost, and the impulse of locomotion shot up in the air and exploded like a rocket. A glorious energy, so fecund in possibilities, stilled its hunger in devouring endless strings of miles, like a piled dish of insipid macaroni. He just went and came back again.

It was while he was in America that Mary wrote to him about "the infidelity of several of your womenkind," and "why not come over and marry Letitia, who will be rich and I daresay still beautiful in your eyes," and "I am glad you are beginning to respect women's feelings." I give these slight extracts because they illustrate once more the gulf of incompatibility between friends of such long standing. Trelawny, as

William Rossetti has recorded, was passionate for women's rights but without ever missing their supreme endowment of grace as women—a rare combination—while of the criminality of marrying a woman for her money he was incapable. But Mary never saw Trelawny except through the drawing-room window on his way to a fancy-dress ball.

## LONDON SOCIETY

Between 1835 and 1845, Trelawny became a Londoner, living first at 1 Duke Street, St. James's, and later at 7 Pelham Crescent, Brompton, which remained his London *pied à terre* for the rest of his life. The reason for this peregrine falcon choosing London for a ten years' beat is given in his own words:

> In what-soever direction I go forth—however far or rapid my flight—it's all the same—I always find myself here again in London—designedly I go—and have reasons—such as they are—for going—coming back is altogether involuntary—I can assign no motive or reason—any more than the stick of a skyrocket that after its airy flight comes tumbling back again—or the winds—or the tides—everything—and forever—seems returning from whence it came with most monotonous regularity.

The fatalism of a man charged with such power of internal combustion and with full steam up, yet laying himself no track to run upon, readily accounts for his aberration of a two years' immersion in London society. He seems to have been fêted as a dark horse, a mystery-man, a wild exotic gathered to the greenhouse, and to have succumbed once more to the temptation of the born romantic to become by artifice the romanticist. Psychologically speaking, he marketed his natural commodities and temporarily became the fond figure of Mary's hallucination. He rubbed shoulders with a whole constellation—Leader, the M.P. for Westminster, Brougham, Landor, Bulwer, d'Orsay, Mrs. Jameson, Lady Blessington, Captain Marryat, the "divine Mrs. Norton," and in their company succeeded for a time in stylising himself. The Captain Sumph drawn in the thirty-fifth chapter of *Pendennis* is thought to be Trelawny, while the pioneer of women's freedom and original of *Diana of the Crossways* enchained the lifelong libertarian and model of the Old Buccaneer in the *Amazing Marriage*. He became one of the beaux of Mrs. Norton, "the Lady of song and beauty," of whom he wrote in 1836 to Mary, one of her satellites, in this bewigged and foppish strain:

> Yes, the darts shot from those eyes are still rankling in my body; yet it is a pleasing pain. The wound of the scorpion is healed by applying the scorpion to the wound. Is she not a glorious being? Have you ever seen such a presence? Is she not dazzling? There is enchantment in all her ways. Talk of the divine power of music, why, she is all melody, and poetry, and beauty, and harmony. How envious and indignant must the English be not to do her homage universal. They never had, or will have again, such a woman as that. I would rather be her slave than king of such an island of Calibans.

Anybody might think he had been reading Lyly's *Euphues* overnight and nothing could be more absurd than the world-weathered salt, with his keen eyes for the follies of mankind, breathing out this spiced fustian in a manner reminiscent of those inflated novels of Mary's which he properly despised. He was certainly very far at this period from living that "real simple truthful full life" of which Shelley and his own instincts had given him the imperishable dream. Still, Mrs. Norton did have that effect on other ardent spirits, and no doubt her wrongs excited his championship.

### FREEDOM AND LADY GORING

The period of deflation from such histrionics was bound to come and fortunately for him it came pretty soon. "My cable is chafing," he wrote towards the end of 1836. It parted, but this time he found a haven. In 1837, he was far more healthily musing the hours away in an old Cornish house at Pencarrow near Bodmin "standing in its wide green domain as a ship on the wide sea," and this quiet taste of the country finally gave him a disgust of the London social round. With his old indomitable spirit, he severed his silken chains and retired to live in a villa on Putney Hill. Lady Blessington wrote to Landor on November 14th, 1839: "I had a letter from Mr. Trelawny, who has taken to lead the life of a recluse in a villa near Putney, never going to see a single acquaintance or friend, and scarcely ever visiting London. He charged me with his kindest regards for you."

I feel this resumption of his truer self to be one of the landmarks in his life, and a genuine act of self-deliverance. The crossing over from St. James's to Putney and then Usk was no trivial splashing through a ford; it was a mutation. Trelawny never returned to his London beguilements; like the man of character he was, and a true apostle of Shelley, he shook himself free of them once and for all, and, nothing spectacular as was his action, there was force of character behind it. His life is full of these reversions and recoveries, like one struggling with a fever, and now, though he left no monument of his achievement until he wrote the *Recollections,* he was again on the crest of the wave. From the London masquerade he went out into the open air, for he was soon (probably in 1847) to become a farmer and gardener in Wales, choosing for his company the local lights in the heart of King Arthur's land in place of the luminaries in London.

Of this joyful change his marriage with Lady Goring,[1] whose date is unknown but which must have happened in the late thirties or very early forties of last century, was undoubtedly the mainspring. He rescued her from great unhappiness with her husband in the same high-hearted spirit that had carried him to Greece and she it was nearly twenty years later who stood behind his pen in the writing of the *Recollections*. Thus every action of Trelawny's life was, directly or indirectly, irrigated by that classical companionship of six months with the poet who showed him the heights and deeps of life itself.

Of that marriage, or rather of what little is known of it, the next chapter must speak. This one ends with Trelawny's more unified response to a new phase in his chequered history.

---

[1] She was the daughter of a Col. and Mrs. Harvey of Thorpe Hall, Norfolk.

# CHAPTER VI

## *THE OLD REBEL*

### 1847—1881

### THE RETURN TO SHELLEY

WE have but one extant and very brief account of Trelawny's life at Usk, maintained in unbroken continuity for eleven years (1847–1858) and disastrously ended by his separation from Mrs. Trelawny, soon after the publication of the *Recollections*. It is lucky then that it happens to be first-hand and written by an understanding woman—Mrs. M. B. Byrde—who had lived in the neighbourhood.[1]

How cleanly Trelawny had broken with his shiftless London life is reflected in the sparseness of his correspondence from Usk. Only five of his letters have survived for our eyes throughout that whole period—one to Claire, written from Pelham Crescent, Brompton, two to Captain Roberts and two (unpublished) to Augusta White, inviting her to come and stay with him at Usk on her passage from Liverpool to London. All of these letters were written almost within a year before his leaving Monmouthshire and none of them give any autobiographical details of the new "point-event" in his variegated career. They are concerned with Shelley almost exclusively, and there is but one reference (to Roberts) to his domestic upheaval:

> My future is uncertain—I shall ride at single anchor awhile. . . . I am hale and strong; but age is creeping on

---

[1] *Athenæum*, August 21, 1897.

> —however I shall keep moving until the last. I am still a lusty swimmer and take my divertissement in and on the water whenever near it; as we age we look backwards and not forwards—the former is bright and the latter dismal.

The last words are sharply significant. The rest of Trelawny's correspondence until his death is nearly all occupied with Shelley, Byron and that Italian spring in which he was to merge the winter of his days. He wrote to Claire:

> Everything spoils by use; the laws of nature and the laws of society are always at war—strong necessity compels the millions to submit—but many will not; everything is imaginary; there is nothing real—"the dream that we call life" is a farce; and our little game is nearly played out: in looking back with a calm eye—how very foolish our lives seem—vanity and folly without aim or object.

This vein of thought serpentines persistently through Trelawny's whole correspondence for close upon sixty years. It must express an indirect recognition of his own comparative failure to make that constructive whole of his life for which the example of Shelley and the natural springs of his primordial energy had been the direction and source. A makeshift life was anathema to him and from his own compromises to it he recoiled with baffled fury.

And always, in the midst of the distracted and ineffective use he made of nature's so lavish endowments to him, he turned back to Shelley, who *was* the religion which satisfied his true nature and resolved all the perplexities of life. As he grew older, and especially after the breakdown of his experiment at Usk, where for more than a decade his moral convictions, his tamelessly instinctive sense of liberty and his particular truth to life were united with an environment that contained and manifested them—he became more and more reabsorbed into his Italian heyday. It is very singular to watch this man growing backwards as his years advanced, and there is no prominent figure in our literary history who has played such tricks with time. He held on to his enormous physical vitality up to the last syllable of consciousness, then suddenly relaxed, turned round and went to sleep. He wrote his *Recollections* as though he had been absent from the Casa Magni thirty-six minutes rather than years, an old man conversing with the long dead in some land of eternal youth. That dream was indeed his life, and the ultimate reason why he felt life itself to be so dream-like.

As the landscape of circumstance through which he trudged with such vitality grew dimmer, the Italian scene, lit by the effulgence radiating from his immortal friend, flowered with bright shoots of everlastingness. He entirely reverses the Wordsworthian canon of spiritual atrophy, by which we leave the vital sources of mountainy youth and descend into the dull plains of custom and conformity with the external world. That world confused and misled the spirit of Trelawny, but never ossified it, so that at eighty he was as caustically up in arms as he had so stormily been at twenty. But it is much more remarkable how he upset the conventional sequences of our mortal span by approaching the sources of his inward reality the further in time he receded from them. The life of Trelawny induces some startling reflections upon the unreality of time as an absolute concept.

That Lady Goring, now Mrs. Trelawny "by a special Act of Parliament" was associated in his mind with

Shelley is shown by his long fidelity to her and by her silent partnership with him in the writing of the *Recollections*. It is impossible otherwise to explain why he delayed so long in writing them. Even so, he did not write them until the concluding period of his marriage, and we have no evidence at all to account for this, unless he waited until the death of Mary Shelley in 1851 (to which he referred in one casual sentence) before beginning his task. His talk with Sir Percy Shelley over old times when Hogg's *Life* was published could only have been a secondary stimulus. The gap between 1851 and 1857 when he was clamouring for Shelleyana from Claire is inexplicable.

### LIFE AT USK

Trelawny came to Usk from Clifton, having been previously captivated by the country of the author of *Olor Iscanus* on a hasty journey through it. He first lived in a house in Newmarket Street, now converted into an inn and here his daughter Letitia was born, whom Mrs. Byrde wrongly calls the original of the girl-figure in Millais's rather lymphatic portrait of Trelawny in *The North-West Passage*. He fixed upon Twyn Bell across the river at Llanbadoc Rock for his "cot," and six years later bought the estate of Cefn Ila on whose ground stood the cot, and moved to a larger house uphill. It was in this house that the *Recollections* were written. Trelawny himself appears to have constructed it, and his passionate life-force found a congenial expression in building, farming, husbandry and horticulture. His farming was so successful that he found the means thereby to build unto himself his own roof-tree. He propped up the crumbling sides of the slope and "as the faithful went to church" was seen planting trees on Llanbadoc Rock. The Titan who had uprooted a good many dead trees in his time was well occupied now in planting live ones. Mrs. Byrde says that among his seedlings were "those brought from Byron's grave and nursed with infinite care." She surely means from Shelley's grave, for more than twenty years later he gave William Rossetti two of the cypress cones from the Iscanian grove he dedicated to the elemental spirit that haunted it and his own heart for ever.

In the meantime the giant from his rock had subdued the people of Usk not merely to his will but their liking.

> It seems very probable [writes Mrs Byrde] that the arrival of such a well-known "free lance," the friend of men whose opinions, about the year '48 were more unpopular than ever among the sedate and conservative, must have caused considerable commotion, which the circumstances of his marriage would not tend to calm.

The scene—Wales, stronghold of religious intolerance; the period—the middle night of mid-Victorianism when domestic suffering was an acceptable burnt-offering to the new pitiless industrial god who had taken his seat in heaven; circumstance—the much-married Trelawny leading his new bride by Act of Parliament (the dissolving of unhappy marriages being then only a privilege of the very rich, which Trelawny certainly was not) into the dragon's maw.

But the dragon only purred for this veteran Siegfried, scarred with his long war against its many heads. As a matter of fact, the Trelawnys were extremely popular in Monmouthshire, which is more than can be said for the irreproachable Landor, whose obedience to the conventions at Llanthony, nearby, could not purchase him the good feeling that Trelawny's natural and Mrs. Trelawny's deeper spiritual bravery had earned them. Trelawny was liberal; he paid good wages; he mixed on comradely terms with the townsfolk, and they very humanly toasted him. He became a bosom friend of the Vicar's, "Master Arthur" as Trelawny called him; he, a lawyer, Partridge, who was known as "the Bird" and the local Doctor trooped to tea on Sunday afternoons. Trelawny made the tea in an Oriental fashion peculiar to himself and the cronies drank it out of large basins. How strangely that scene conjures an amalgam of Mrs. Unwin's drawing-room and the hall where Beowulf caroused with his thanes!

Trelawny did exactly as he chose at Cefn Ila. Zella used to visit him from Italy and her father put up a large tent by the river whence the whole party bathed. "Her progress from the river bank was marked by yards of ravelled lace edging, torn from her petticoats by the brambles, she quite unheeding." Children of the neighbourhood used to visit him and he to drag them up the slope and give them rare sweets at the top. He cut off the locks of a Hudsonian small girl who used to play with him because they got in the way of her sport, and sent her back to her mother shorn as Zella's mother had been. But the wise mother said: "It's no use being angry with Mr. Trelawny. He would only laugh and declare he did quite right." Some children were terrified "by his big voice and over-powering presence." That voice, like his hardihood and demigod appearance, was mythical in range and prowess, and must have sounded something like the roar of a host of starlings roused from their reed-bed. "Sometimes," wrote Mary Shelley, "I flattered myself that the foundations of my little habitation would have been shaken by a 'Ship Shelley ahoy!' that even Jane, distant a mile, would have heard." Sir Sidney Colvin, on a visit paid to old Triton six months before his death, received his trumpetings thus:

> From time to time he would rise, almost bound, up in his chair, with his eyes fastened on yours like a vice, and in tones of incredible power would roar what he had to say into your face. I never heard from human lungs a voice so energetic as that burst from the old man in these explosions; explosions which subsided quickly, and in the intervals of which his accents were quiet and muffled as before.

No wonder that such blasts from the furnace within made the children tremble.

There is no sign in these later years that the ageing Olympian abated one jot of his revolutionary sympathies, so that the parson's surrender was not the least of the triumphs of a Colossus whom the frail ghost of the pard-like Shelley alone had led captive and for sixty years. "He liked his friends," writes Mrs. Byrde, "to be poorer and younger or less intellectual than himself. If they were in trouble, he would do anything for them, but he liked them less in prosperity." Judge Falconer was one of his friends at Usk, but when he cast off his straitened, briefless barristerhood to become a judge of the county court, he ceased to be *persona grata* at Cefn Ila. Thus, yielding nothing to prejudice, compelling a countryside of stereotyped landed and legal and clerical gentry to accept him at his own valuation, dominating by sheer force of personality a little country town as coated, no doubt, as all other little country towns, in the embalming paste of mid-Victorianism, and incapable, by the austerity of his temper, of insinuating himself into its graces, he lived, the master of his environment, for eleven years. An heroic tale.

### ITS DISMAL END

The more pity that it came to an end so ignominious. Mrs. Byrde is our only authority for the event that crumbled his power, disintegrated the stable unity of life he had reached and drove him forth once more a wanderer. But there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of her narrative. "They [the Trelawnys] lived," she writes, "as pleased them, and the Mrs. Grundy of that generation has failed to note her disapproval of their proceedings until the scandal of the last year aroused a more than Grundian displeasure." In short, he introduced into his household a "Miss B," in "the simple belief in his own power to do as he willed, or rather a simple inability to see anything unusual in what he willed." She was very small and he of towering physique and "this shaggy Samson" was to be seen "carrying the diminutive form of his Delilah to and from his carriage at the foot of Llanbadoc Rock—his Delilah who was not even pretty, if the memories of my informants are to be trusted." He was sixty-six!

Mrs. Trelawny acted with promptitude, and "for the second time threw off her bondage. But this time it was to face the world alone." I shall give what happened in Mrs. Byrde's own words, for they bear the stamp of truth:

> Mrs. Trelawny was so manifestly superior to her rival in mind and person and had so endeared herself to many by her charity that she had the suffrages of all classes. She

bore herself with dignity in her trial—removed to some lodgings in the town under pretext of business, but did not "make a scene." A complete break-up soon followed. Cefn Ila was sold, with all its furniture and most of the books. It was a three days' auction, and is still talked of by the old people because of Trelawny's unexampled hospitality during its progress. Open house was kept, and no embargo placed on any supplies except whiskey for which he had a great dislike. And so he departed from Monmouthshire, and was seen no more.

So the brightness of those years at Usk burnt itself out in acrid fumes which the biographer relates with a heavy heart. His sympathies have all to be bestowed on Mrs. Trelawny who yet could look back upon her lost Mecca without regrets. She had braved the world in a great act of devotion, and won it to her in its own despite. No praise can be too high for her splendid courage, not only in defying so peculiarly cruel and vindictive a social morality as the Victorian, but in merging her destiny with so hazardous a defender of her faith as Trelawny. If the event had in the end betrayed her, she had not failed herself and therein was more fortunate than Trelawny.

It is not prudishness that recoils from his stumbling in the way. He was committed in his own intuitive being to the romantic concept of life, and in this action he turned from himself into the wilderness. Let him shatter all the jerrybuilt mock-moral rules of Victorian society he chose; he never believed in them, and it is assuredly not on that score one finds his conduct all but indefensible. One says "all but" because its one merit is that it was not clandestine; the realist French view of an intrigue was always abhorrent to him, and he was of too firm a probity to accede to the view that morals begin underground and end with discovery. He left that to the conformists who will condone anything but the truth, and sanction any violation of their own code, so long as it be not an honest one, and others learn of it. For the conventional code between men and women, being based on the rights of property, is subject to the lowest common multiple of public opinion, which, as property itself is based on the idea of force, is its kind of police.

Trelawny's moral liquidation in 1858 was due rather to the forgery of his own signature. He was false to his own values which his intrinsic nature combined with Shelley's inspiration had identified with the romantic concept of life. The affair with Miss B. certainly reads like a mere flourish in promiscuity, a form of behaviour far more congenial to civilised artifice with its dualism of flesh and spirit than either to primitive society or romantic feeling. And Trelawny's surrender was the more disastrous because the promiscuous can never sport except in the shadow of the Puritan's black gown. He is more to be feared as the enemy of a free and happy society than the wantoning of all the revellers that ever were, not only because he is their parent but the breeder of a worse viciousness, one that is usually more violent but, some of it at any rate, recognised by society not as reprehensible but respectable. Persecution, acquisitiveness, fierce economic subjection and competition, rapacity in divers forms, the "power-complex" with its endless legacy of unhappiness—until the conditions of society are more scientifically examined in the light of our new knowledge of the primitive and instinctive in man—we do not know to what extent these civilised vices are the product of Puritan repressiveness. But we know enough to realise that Puritanism is in some measure responsible for them, as it is for promiscuity and promiscuity itself for a revival of Puritanism. There is a close enough link between evil-thinker and evil-doer.

This is in no sense a digression. As a romantic in grain and an apostle of Shelley, Trelawny was privileged with no mean responsibility for conveying to the world the example of a richer and more positive art of living than its own lifeless canons could show. When he doused his own glim, he was investing in darkness, and presenting to the enemies of his and Shelley's faith a weapon against it. And no romantic can in his loneliness, with fellows few and far between, afford to do that.

Mrs. Byrde's epitaph upon Trelawny's Indian summer at Usk is as follows:

> Big in every way he must have been, but not great, demanding much room, as big people do, for mind and body, selfish, yet capable of unselfish deeds; limited in sympathy, but irresistible where he gave it; brave always, noble sometimes, commonplace never—such he seems to have shown himself to our Usk folk in the eleven years of his country life.

That is both acute and just, but in its necessarily sectional perspective it does leave out his supreme quality—the power of devotion, fed from his abounding inner springs, expressed fitfully and gropingly in his external life, carried into byways, but with amazing resilience always recovered intact. Trelawny often fell by the wayside, but at least he did not stay in the ruts with Mary, where you are quite safe from falling.

### LAST YEARS

The sources for material upon Trelawny's last years (1858–1881) are to be traced mainly to his own letters, his talks with Mr. Richard Edgcumbe and William Rossetti, a pleasant personal sketch by Miss Mathilde Blind published in the *Whitehall Review* (January 10th, 1880), and Colvin's very graphic impression gathered shortly before his death. One hears nothing of him through any member of his family, for, as he wrote to Claire, "Liberty and solitude are our chief solaces—the weak cling to their relations—I have always detested and avoided mine." I lose sight of him between 1858 and 1869, when he purchased a few acres at Sompting, three miles from Worthing, together with the small cottage in which he died. It is probable that he lived at 7 Pelham Crescent, Brompton, during part of the interregnum and later he divided his time between Sompting and Putney until he was eighty, when he remained in the country. After leaving Usk, he made a pilgrimage along the western and southern coasts in a light trap, a nomadism he found a relief, "after being stuck so long in the mud of Monmouthshire." From an unpublished letter to J. Hain Friswell, written in August, 1869, it appears that he never missed spending the late summer in Baden Baden, where he railed at the fashionable race-meetings and described the Prince of Wales ("Lord Renfrew") as "very fat, yellow and bald."

The fragmentary Trelawniana of his last years carry a triple impression of his extraordinary powers of body and tenacity of mental life; his persistence in the liberal doctrines of his Italian initiation and his reabsorption into the charmed circle of Shelley's influence. That was his final anchorage and in its infinite rest to him he died.

### THE GIANT

To dwell upon Trelawny's integrity of body is not quite the trivial excuse for biographical relaxation as appears. It was one expression of his Renaissance being, while his powers of endurance and tenacity of life carry us back one stage further to the massive if vaguely defined shapes of Pagan mythology. He might well be called the last of the giants of the Mediterranean seaboard, the sole survivor of the race of Theseus, Hercules, Og, Cadmus and the Dioscuri who, rayed with semi-divinity, colonised the metal-lands of Western Europe. The megalithic centres of archaic England are dyed in legends of these giant pioneers from the Eastern Mediterranean, and, at Cerne Abbas in Dorset and Wilmington in Sussex, their effigies are graved in white upon the downland turf. Some drops of the hot blood of Gog and Magog seem to have been transfused into the veins of Edward Trelawny, who is so ill accommodated to his Victorian background.

Shelley's elementalism, sublimated into spirit but never snapped off from its natural roots in the soil, was manifested in one aspect of Trelawny by a vitality of body truculent to death beyond the normal span of years. His physique was an integral part of his personality; its health a symptom of his freedom from repressions and inhibitions. There was nothing wrong with Trelawny's impulses, as he himself in one of his rare moments of self-insight declared; it was their misdirection that plunged him into his many errors. Therefore his bodily life is of interest to the biographer as a part revelation of himself as something akin to a force of nature. There is no holiness about Trelawny as there is about Shelley—except in his devotion to him—but in the last resort, health, holiness and wholeness are all derived from the same root-term.

Trelawny was sixty-six years old when his life at Usk ended in such dismal futility. He told Claire at that time that he was white-bearded and venerable, but retained all his faculties of mind and body in their wonted acuteness and flexibility, except that his "eagle eyes" were not so piercing as heretofore. To Captain Roberts about the same time he wrote:

> I am still hard and strong, can swim a mile and walk ten without effort, and live on fruit and trash as of old, no wine or at least very rarely, beer occasionally, tobacco regularly [he imported his own latakia from the East]—simple living, out-door exercise, etc., etc., and a cold bath every day winter and summer.

"Warm clothing and caudling," he said, "I abhor," and as late as 1870, when he was within hail of the eighties, he used to walk from Brompton into town and back, a matter of five miles a day. A year later: "I am free from all the aches and pains and decrepitude of age, and pursue my old habits as the Indians do: an American seeing me coming out of the sea, said, 'Why that is an Indian.' " He weighed just the same at eighty as he did at forty (thirteen stone), and never wore either a great coat or underclothes. "Hard work in the open air is the best physician," he said, and throughout the eighties he would go out in his shirt sleeves after his "icy cold bath" to work in the garden with his old gardener of eighty-seven who was as hale as himself. Whether it was his frugality, his simplicity of daily life

E. J. TRELAWNY
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH IN THE POSSESSION OF MRS. CALL

and avoidance of all luxury, his Spartan habits or his iron constitution or all of them in one, he was, in spite of the ball still lodged in his breast, never ill,—only somewhat tired a week or two before his death. The day he died, says Rossetti, he got up complaining of weariness. "His eye was still bright, his voice firm and his memory fresh as of yore"—a striking corroboration of his own words to Claire in 1873—"I shall go on with my usual habits until death stops me and there is an end of it." That resolve he carried out to the letter and Mr. Richard Edgcumbe describes how at eighty-three his every movement was still a translation into active terms of the undimmed force within. Drinking a glass of water when he got out of bed in the morning and eating little more than bread and fruit during the day, he was more than justified in writing to Claire: "I live as plainly, not to say roughly, as when you knew me." Cooke, in his Paul Pry letter to Severn's son about the babe-in-the-parcel canard (1878), describes seeing him at the Turkish Baths at Brompton when he was eighty-two: "He peeled as clean and muscular as a man of 50." How just then was his dislike of the huddled figure, shrunk into its clothes, of the octogenarian in Millais's *The North-West Passage.* In the fullness of his time he went to his death with an upright and fearless step as a man might walk upstairs to bed when drowsiness throws a dusk upon his accomplished day.

### A TAMELESS MIND

His freshness and volcanic force of mind remained as untouched by a Struldbrug decrepitude as his physical capacity. In February, 1881, six months before

William Rossetti received a telegram on August 13th from his housekeeper, Miss Taylor, "All is over," Sir Sidney Colvin put on record (February 1920, *Scribner's Magazine*) his only meeting with the legendary survivor of the Romantic Revival. That meeting so well illustrates the heat within its rugged basin of the crater which had only just begun to feel the cooling of its central fires, that I shall give some extracts from it. Newton and Colvin were the guests of Captain and Lady Alice Gainsford at their house a mile away from the Sompting cottage. Here (under protest from Lady Alice) they determined to call upon the old rebel:

> The house where Trelawny lived was a large cottage painted red and set back a little way on the left hand side of the road, not far from the entrance to the village. The veteran received us in a small, old-fashioned room on the ground floor, where he sat in an armchair with a couple of black-and-tan terriers playing at his feet.

Only lately had he given up bathing in the sea in all weathers,

> and warming himself on the coldest mornings, not at the fire which he refused to have lighted before noon, but by the exercise of chopping wood. . . . He scarcely moved himself in his chair at our entrance, but sat in a shrunken attitude, with his hands on his knees, speaking little, and as if he could only fix his attention by an effort. He wore an embroidered red cap, of an unbecoming shape in use in Byron's day with a stiff, projecting peak. He thus appeared to no advantage; nevertheless, in the ashen colour of the face, the rough gray hair and beard and firmly modelled mouth set slightly awry, in the hard, clear, handsome, aquiline profile (for the nose, though not long, was of marked aquiline shape),[1] and in the masterful scowling gray eye, there were traces of something both more distin-

---

[1] See p. 33.

guished and more formidable than is seen in Sir John Millais's well-known likeness of him . . . a likeness with which the sitter himself was much dissatisfied.

That stentorian voice was at first weak and muffled, but what it spoke still retained elements of that lifelong bluntness and bluffness of utterance which was partly natural and partly mannered. Gradually he roused himself and his talk became "curiously impressive." "His moral and social recklessness, his defiance of current opinions, his turbulent energy, his sure eye for character, and his no less sure instinct for literature, all made themselves felt, along with the extraordinary interest of his experiences." They talked of the Boer War and "Trelawny defiantly declared his hope that the English would be beaten. 'If I were a younger man,' he shouted in a strong crescendo, 'I would go and fight for the Boers—fight for the Boers—fight for the Boers.'" What a triumph for the mechanical denudations of time, not to mention the "huge obscene machine" of industrialism, if like thousands of others to whom age brings sclerosis of spirit, the old sea-dog had, just before he went down, declared himself a Jingo!

They then passed on to the Greek War, and Trelawny, being asked if Fenton's shot had been in the back and thinking that his enquirers were referring to Fenton's death at the hands of his Hungarian servant, "rose, with a roar and a flash, and shouted, 'no, in the face, in the face.'" He showed them the scar his hand still bore from snatching Shelley's heart from the funeral pyre, talked of the 'Ariel' putting out to sea as though it had sailed from Worthing that morning and told his listeners that it had been at Armitage Brown's suggestion that he had devoted many chapters of the *Adven-*

*tures of a Younger Son* to quotations from Keats.[1] All these strata of retrospection "showed me how entirely the old man was thinking in the light of his own experiences . . . 55 years earlier." Many old men do likewise, but Trelawny, in so dwelling upon the past, found therein the sources of his own life. He lived in the past; other ancients are dead in it, and in this he was unique.

Memories of Shelley and Keats brought the talk round to Blake, whose works he had recently discovered through the publication of Gilchrist's *Life* and Rossetti's reprints:

> He proceeded to recite standing, with the full force of his tremendous voice, some stanzas of the poem, *London,* from the *Songs of Experience*—
>
> In every cry of every man,
>   In every infant's cry of fear,
> In every voice, in every ban,
>   The mind-forged manacles I hear.

Four years previously he had told William Rossetti not only of his passion for Blake's poems but of his veneration for the exquisite married life between Blake and his wife. There is something very moving in this Gargantuan swan-song of lines so expressive of the chanter's own long war upon the bondage of the mind. It is a signal example, too, of the almost mystic dependence of his life upon the romantic poets, and of how his more and more submergence in their company as his years drew on preserved his freshness of vision. He read Whitman whom he said possessed the materials of poetry rather than poetry, and studied Darwin, who perhaps was responsible for passages in his later letters of the cruder type of rationalism. Tennyson belonged to "the feeble race of ballad mongers," and the only poet who had inherited the mantle of Shelley was Swinburne, who dedicated his *Songs of the Springtides* to him and wrote his epitaph in *Tristram of Lyonesse*[1] (1882).

---

[1] See p. 6.

In 1875 he discussed with Rossetti proposing Swinburne for the Byron Committee, and though this poet is justly *démodé* nowadays, the first appearance of *Poems and Ballads* was virtually the first sign of thaw in the great frost of Victorianism. Swinburne was something more than a second-rate poet; he was an historical portent, and Trelawny's recognition of him was a gesture of association with the beginnings of revolt against an age which he had passed through unscathed. Thus, Trelawny's spiritual reunion with Shelley, which is so marked a feature of his life between the disaster at Usk and his death at Sompting, is thoroughly consistent with his discovery of Blake and Swinburne. His life began at Pisa when he was thirty, for the autobiography of his younger years was the consequence of his intimacy with the Pisan circle; it assuredly ended where it had begun and that his ashes should have been buried by Shelley's at Rome was a finis of perfect appropriateness.

Colvin's reminiscences are our last authentic glimpse of the great oak before it was felled, and even the ceremonies of leave-taking reflect, if I may vary the metaphor, the spasmodic flares of the dying volcano:

> On taking leave in the hall, Newton congratulated him on looking so well. Whereupon I could hear the old man, standing behind him, and conscious no doubt of his own fast declining health, growl to himself—"S'very well, s'very

---

[1] The poem is not really good enough for quotation.

well; that's the kind o' lies I was talking of: lies, lies, lies." His last words to us were nevertheless kindly. . . . It did not need the notes, which on this single exceptional occasion I took at the time, to keep vivid in my mind the image of this hard-bitten, keen-visaged, bull-voiced, rich-memoried veteran as he stood grumbling, but not unfriendly, on his doorstep.

He could well write, ten years earlier: "Age has not tamed or altered me." How many of us are not killed soon after we are born by an educational system that needs a tough enough vitality of mind to survive it; how few of us carry over into middle age the ardours of the twenties, and is there a tithe of the company passing the sixties who have not so compromised with the world as to become ghosts on this side the grave, ghosts that haunt and persecute the living as the dead *de facto* have not the power to do? And of those who do keep alive the spark, how many do not burn it away in vainlonging or hopeless maladjustment, in a world where to feel deeply is but to suffer? It would be safe to say that not one in a hundred thousand retains his or her fires like the Titan who died in Sussex just under fifty years ago.

### BYRONISM CAST OFF

The extant accounts of Trelawny are brief, scattered, disunited, often oblique and mostly hidden away in defunct periodicals. It is to be expected therefore that they fail to convey any organic impression of a man who saw a whole century almost as far as its end. More than one writer, for instance, has commented upon the censorious talk and peevish disposition of the final years at Sompting. I think that this view is erroneous. One notable change to be detected in the final letters is a definite shedding of the earlier Byronism which had done the wearer of it nothing but harm for decades, coupled with a milder attitude towards Byron himself. This is significant, for there can be no doubt that Trelawny's hostility to Byron was in part due to an unconscious (Trelawny was no analyst) disrelish for the Byronic element in himself. This was a true intuition, and if Trelawny had been able to intellectualise his intuitions, he would have wandered from the way of his true self much less than he actually did. His last Byronic escapade was the cause of his leaving Usk, and henceforward he cast off that attitudinising and self-dramatisation which had so often prevented his real nature from achieving that "simple, truthful, full life" of which Shelley, the purer romantic, had shown him the possibility. It was very natural, then, that this new freedom should have corresponded with a number of more genial references to Byron.

He told Claire in 1869, for instance, that hatred of Byron was a bee in her bonnet; that he [Byron] had never intended any ill to Allegra, as Claire persisted in believing; that he [Trelawny] never believed a word of the Byron scandal [a generous error, see chapter 11] and that her "relentless vindictiveness against Byron is not tolerated by any religion that I know of." Byron's friends, he wrote to her, had "bedevilled" him, which was perfectly true. To Miss Blind, he dwelt with an artist's pleasure on Byron's physical beauty:

> The upper part of his figure was nobly proportioned, and his throat was like a column. He had most beautiful eyes, well set in his head; they were like a cat's, changing continually in colour, now brown, now golden, then green, full of ever-varying expression.

He told Rossetti a dubious story of how Fletcher, Byron's familiar valet, had read his master the Bible on his death bed and how Byron had exclaimed, "Shut it up; that is all weakness, weakness, weakness." In 1875, he became a member of the Committee for a National Memorial to Byron,[1] of which Disraeli, Alfred Austin and Swinburne were other members, and I have already mentioned how he warned Rossetti, if he saw Claire in Florence, to be on his guard against her animosity to one who deserved better of fame than her personal venom would grant.

On the other hand, he told Rossetti that Byron was somewhat jealous of Shelley's genius, which I strongly doubt, and gave an unpardonable support to Leigh Hunt's *Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries*. He had the grace to add, though, that Hunt wrote as he did because the incompatibility of the two men living in the same house had fostered Byron's more disagreeable side. His memories of Byron in the talks with Mr. Edgcumbe were not ill-natured and are principally concerned with him as a foil to Shelley. Here is a characteristic sample:

> There was no feeling against Byron—against Shelley plenty, against Byron none. Shelley was simply without vice of any kind. Byron's attack against cant was mainly on account of the manner in which Shelley was treated. He said to me one day, "Look how the groundlings attack Shelley. He is better than anyone." I said, "Would you defend him?," and he answered, "Shelley requires no defender. I write for the groundlings, Shelley writes for men; when I am 40, I will write for men also."

He did not write but died for them.

---

[1] It vomited the wretched thing that stands, against Trelawny's approval, near Apsley House.

It would be a mistake to presume from these references that in essentials Trelawny had changed his mind about a man who had accentuated the more unreal and theatrical infusions of his own character. But his opinion of Byron in the later years is emphatically not "peevish" nor distorted by any bitterness. That icy shade had ceased to torment him and he had borrowed something of its scathing insight into his own follies. So we find that little mistake about Byron's foot rectified in the *Records*. The mental distortion had passed with the physical. The climate is distinctly less easterly, though the reader longs in vain that he should have perceived at the last the true reason why Byron went into Greece and done that great act of self-freedom its full justice. He did at any rate realise what Byron's destiny might have been had he lived. His answer to Miss Blind's question on that score was: "Why, he might have been President, or King of Greece. Odysseus, the only capable man the Greeks had, and myself would have managed it." Could vanity be more disarming?

Nor is "censoriousness" a well-balanced word for Trelawny's final judgments of the quick and the dead. Caustic they frequently are and disdainful of all whitewash, but sour they are not. They are what you might call lean judgments, for in no sense of the term did Trelawny go soft as he approached the gate of death. He was not concerned with bequeathing an image of amiability to posterity, but rather with his reckoning with truth, and truth was the last familiar of the man whom Byron had called an unconscionable liar. His sayings are now stripped of all superfluities and decorations and his sailor-like manner is no longer a mannerism. His rather gloomy vein of Ecclesiastes is matched with a contempt for humbug and false pretences which included his own, for all self-protective padding, for possessiveness masquerading as principle, for the strut of complacence, for any insinuating duplicity of the Mary Shelley brand. Against these his jealously guarded independence burned fiercer than ever, saying: "Reason is like the walking gentleman in a comedy uttering moral sentiments that every one laughs at—shams, cant and hypocrisy prevail." That age mellowed him is not strictly true, and somehow irrelevant. It would be more to the point to say that his values acquired a sharper outline. He was weary of all the shows.

He dismissed Godwin, Peacock, Medwin and Hunt with a scratch of the pen, but of the simple, genuine, open-hearted Edward Williams, Shelley's friend who never preyed on him, he wrote, "I loved him." Of Hogg, he said: "his love was pure, and the one bit of romance in his life. Hogg was a soured and grossly ill-used able man; his life of Shelley's early years is most interesting and most ably written." He could write testily enough to Claire about some detractor of Harriet: "B. . . . is a worldly, self-seeking tuft-hunter, devoid of sympathy or sentiment, and his talk is obscene, and to me offensive," but if his criticisms were sweeping, he did not omit to use the broom on himself: "Nothing amazes me so much as the labyrinth of follies I have wandered in all my life." He became more gentle to women and vehemently advocated not only their social and moral equality with men, but what is much more important, their domestic freedom. He was curiously passionate in his championship of Harriet both to Mr. Edgcumbe and Rossetti, and his changed (though not always consistently so) opinion of women is reflected many times over. He was tolerant of Jane Williams (still alive in 1873), warm-hearted with Claire, if gruff with her humours and querulousness, and he tried to get a pension for the second Mrs. Godwin. Of his attitude to Mary Shelley I have already written at length. But as an example of his incisive detachment and formidable truth-telling, clearly exempt from any trace of ill-will, I propose to quote what he wrote to Rossetti in the same year as the publication of the *Records*:

> The writers who knew nothing of Shelley . . . are endeavouring to show that the Poet's Wife was endowed with every talent and every virtue. Had it been so, my statement of the utter desolation and isolation in which he lived would be exaggeration. . . . He received no solace or sympathy from his Early Friends, who disapproved of everything he wrote. His Wife was of their opinion, and not of his, the dissimilarity of their views on every subject was a bar to his uttering his thoughts to her. . . . It was impossible for me to describe the Poet as he was, without describing his Wife as she was. I had no enmity against Mrs. Shelley.

The truth is that as the ancient mariner hove in sight of death, he changed only in the sense of dropping his former luxuries of temperament overboard, and putting an even keener edge on the qualities that survived. It is probable that something of his earlier ruggedness was assumed; now it was the clothing of his intrinsic mind. But the revolutionary knight-errant never put off his armour, and it is not every octogenarian who writes: "I still think that everything that is is wrong—and should like to see the world turned topsy-turvy—and there is a prospect that it will be." Still clasping the inviolable shade! If he had seen Italy in 1930. . . ! Again: "Enthusiasts and fanatics are the men that move the world," he said to Miss Blind at Sompting. The truest estimate of his old age is, I think, the emergence of the quintessential Trelawny from a number of incidental Trelawnys that had led him a pretty dance hither and thither.

### LAST DAYS AT SOMPTING

It was very natural then that his last slice of superabundant life should have been possessed by the idea of Shelley to a greater extent than at any period of his wavering career since he had sailed with Byron for Greece. Both his written words and his country life at Sompting testify to this overmastering preoccupation. In a poignant new way, he seems to have lived Shelley in his daily round as well as glorified him in his talk and letters. At Sompting, he developed a love for animals in the key of Shelley's own, a kind of conversion indeed from his old unregenerate shooting days. He liked to have animals about the house, and if he met any starved dog or bedraggled cat on his walks, he would bring it home with him and give it shelter. In place of a libation to the gods before he drank, the strayed Olympian scattered bread for the birds after he had eaten. His tiny estate he turned into a bird sanctuary and so detested the persecution of animals that when two men appeared with guns on his land and asked his leave to shoot a bird that had taken refuge there, he said : "What I will give you is—full permission to shoot one another."

We should hardly find such quickening of sensibility unusual nowadays. But contrast it with the appalling raven story in *The Adventures of a Younger Son.* In the eighties of last century, moreover, England was infested with gunmen busily engaged in potting all and sundry species as a gentleman's recreation and exterminating our larger ones from their immemorial nesting grounds. In Victorian times, England was a bear-garden for cruelty.

Like Shelley too, he, the dauntless free-thinker, gave like a Christian, as though he had but just returned not from church like Mary, but from the Sermon on the Mount. For not once or twice he returned from his walks without a coat to his back. The profuse liberality that had served Mary and Claire and Kirkup, the old negro slave in Carolina, his would-be-assassin on Mount Parnassus, and the townsfolk of Usk, was now extended to the villagers of Sompting.

Oddly too he reminds me of Shelley, longing to bathe with the pagan peasants on carnival in the Bay of Spezia, and restrained by Mary, when he summed up the manner of his life at Sompting by "I live as the natives." Himself affords us a glimpse of this new orientation in these words (1871):

> I am almost constantly in the country on the South Coast within sight of the sea—so you see I am constant to my first love. I have Shelley's mania for water—I should have pitched my tent on the shores of the Mediterranean; . . . the mind does not age with the body [so much for his Darwinian rationalism!]—all my early convictions and feelings harden with my bones.

Thin the line that divides these elemental brothers, the one at thirty between the sea and mountains of Italy, the other at eighty-seven on the Sussex Downs, when we visualise the Homeric figure rising from his bed and singing, taking his air-bath before he dressed, drawing his own water, chopping his own wood and breakfasting off cold water, bread and fruit which he ate standing—standing as Shelley stood during his meals in company with a folio. Meat, like Shelley, he eschewed in his old age, and like Shelley he was out in all weathers. He took great pride in his crop of figs, which, he said, were as good as any he ate with Shelley in Italy.

Scanty as are the details of his last years that have come down to us, they are artistically satisfying in a dual sense. He had refined himself of all the Byronic flourishes and in like manner reduced his material needs to their bare essentials. Free of society, its complex artificial claims and creation of superfluous wants, its elaborate machinery of system and institution by which Man is moulded to the Sabbath, he was enabled to reassert that correspondence between inner and outward being which he had perceived in the living example of Shelley. The process was not of course intellectualised as it was in Shelley, but still it would be true to say that at the very end of his life, Trelawny had secured that liberating coöperation between mind and instinct of which Mr. Fausset has written with such insight in the *Proving of Psyche,* and the ancient of Sompting had failed to win through the many phases of his wayward but always seeking experience. His last days were integrated, and if they had lost their restlessness, they were in no sense otiose, as old age thinks itself privileged to be. Mind, body and estate were of all one piece at last. It is remarkable to observe, therefore, how very closely the Sompting years are linked up both in thought and action with Shelley.

MEMORIES OF SHELLEY

That Trelawny was conscious of this communication between the greater elemental and the less in all its rather mysterious bearings I do not believe. If he had been so, his discipleship would have taken on an aspect of imitation from which it is wholly free. He imitated Odysseus to the letter, as Millingen records, but his kinship with Shelley was both instinctive and spiritual, and so had no need of such laborious undertakings. He was acting no part in living within that kinship, but obeying the impulses of his deeper nature, and so a thousand times over he was right.

I have already referred in the last chapter to the extent in which the letters of his final span are saturated in memories of Shelley. I run my eyes over my notes on his talks with Rossetti and Mr. Edgcumbe, which belong to the post-Iscanian period, and find them caught by the magic name on almost every line. The *Recollections* were issued in the last year of his residence at Usk and the *Records*, its supplemented new edition, twenty years later, so that these two books virtually correspond in period with the Shelley talks and the Shelley letters. To the same era, for one speaks in cycles of this patriarch's longevity, is to be added the lengthy correspondence to the *Times* about the ramming of the "Ariel" (see Appendix II), and to the *Athenæum* replying to Richard Garnett's "Shelley's Last Days" (see p. 218).

The references to his own two editions are exceeding few and in striking contrast with the copiousness of those to the subject of them. To the *Records* he merely alludes, asking Rossetti to take a copy to Paris with him

(1878) and show it to the painter Gérôme, who had begun a picture of the shore with its background where the classical cremation took place.[1]

> Gérôme [he told Miss Blind] ought to introduce the pines in his picture. They are characteristic of Shelley and of the place. Their tall, straight stems, forty feet high, rose at equal distances one from the other, and, although the sun never penetrated through their interlacing boughs, it would cast a red light on the trunks below.

The *Recollections* is a masterpiece, the very best living representation of a great poet's privacy in English and written in a language better than the angels speak, for its words are the accents of men living a more intense and articulate life than their fellows. Yet Trelawny writes of a book that catches the spontaneity of nature as it flies with a modesty that reminds one of Shelley's own about his poetry:

> My book [he scribbled to Captain Roberts] an octavo volume, is out and is tolerably successful. You have your place in it; your view of Lerici and the Don Juan is in it, and extracts from your letters. I have been as accurate as I possibly could in every particular, brief and to the point—but how the devil am I to send you a copy?

And again, five months later to the same reader:

> How do you like the book? and is there anything in it you dislike?—as I could alter or expunge in another edition; the book is brief and to the point and has elevated Shelley and shown Byron as he was. My wish was to tell nothing but the truth, tho' I could not tell the whole truth —that is impossible in any account of anybody—the cant and humbug of the world is too potent—the book is by all votes amusing and the style is vigorous and clear—I published it at my own expense.

---

[1] His daughter Letitia made a sketch of the scene.

For the rest of his correspondence with Claire, he is besieging her for memorials of Shelley[1] and rebuilding his lost Italian microcosm with a power of projection into the past which vindicates his very words: "The mind never gets old." Those revisitings had little or nothing to do with a revival of interest in Shelley's work, for, as he told her: "Shelley is no more abused, and more read, but not popular; he is too metaphysical, imaginative and abstract to be comprehended by any but such as have a touch of his quality."

I have mentioned his eager welcome to Rossetti's edition, and how completely his mind was transported into and dwelt in vanished scenes a whole sea of time away, how burned upon his memory they were, is illustrated by the minutiae of his description to Rossetti of the landscape of the cremation: "The white sandy beach, the air tremulous with the intense noonday heat —not a weed or green tuft—everything brown and scorched, and desolation all round." It is all very well to suggest that he referred to his contemporary notes, but Trelawny restores the life of those scenes; he reanimates them like a necromancer recalling vasty spirits from the deep. His correspondence ends with his instructions through Rossetti to the Custodian of the English Cemetery at Rome that his ashes should be deposited in the tomb he had bought next to Shelley's. Thirteen months before Trelawny was buried beside Shelley, Joseph Severn had been interred beside Keats. His wishes were faithfully executed by Miss Taylor, who looked after him at Sompting. She had the body embalmed, took it to Gotha where it was cremated and thence carried to Rome Thus was there continuity between life and death.

---

[1] He offered her £50 in 1873 for some Shelley papers. She refused.

* * * *

## THE SUMMING UP

To play the Recording Angel and draw up a balance-sheet for Edward Trelawny would be to excite his Homeric laughter in the Elysian Fields. That method of characterisation is happily *vieux jeu*. A real man is more than an account-book. The virtues of our fathers look rather the worse for wear to-day and we have laid to heart Samuel Butler's saying that the devil is at his best when robed like an angel. No man again, unless well stocked with potential virtues, is capable of vices—unless he performs them dutifully and conscientiously as Baudelaire did. If I were to attempt a catalogue of Trelawny's "virtues" and "vices," I should soon find the credit figures getting mixed up with the debits, for his qualities ministered to his faults and his faults were the lefthandedness of his qualities.

Nor does any man remain as nature made him. Private circumstance and social environment write heavy marginalia upon his original inheritance and too often distort the text. They certainly did with Trelawny, though not to the same extent as with Byron. Three circumstances—family upbringing, Byron's scorn and Shelley's premature loss—drove deep trenches athwart his nature. The first and the last came at the wrong time, domestic tyranny at the chaotic stage of self-unfolding, the quenching of his star at the delicate point when that chaos was resolved. The one schooling armed him with the hatred, the cessation of the other disarmed him of purpose. Trelawny was a natural rebel, for the simple reason that he was too richly endowed with vitality to put up with any system that depressed it. But the harsh dogmatism of his family life made his detestation of the taboos of authority and the shams of society too self-conscious, too much turned in upon himself. He plumed himself upon his rebelliousness as Iago plumed himself upon the power of his will and Mr. Gladstone upon his respectability. He would act a rebellious part for the look of the thing, for the pleasure of a defiant gesture, and this weakness for treading the boards, fed alike by Mary Shelley, a born sentimentalist, and the Byronic legacy, led both to dissipation of energy and a lack of discrimination between important abuses that were worth all the weight of his valiant arm against them and the trivial amenities of social life that were not. Byron's mockery aggravated this tendency.

Shelley's fatal loss affected him somewhat differently. Nobody can study Trelawny without reflecting how much of the exuberance of life within him ran to waste. Its splendid impulses were frequently misdirected, and its immense capacities for achieving a unified art of living dislocated. He did fail except at certain periods to make the best of himself. His large instinctive powers were not gathered up into a philosophic or intellectual content, while his life wanted self-government. I refrain from employing the term "self-control," partly because it is commonly used by people who have nothing to control, and partly because the problem of individual character never is self-control but self-unification. Beware of the "self-control" expert; what he really wants to do is to control you for his own ends; he has a bad heart.

Trelawny had in the Shelley of Pisa and Lerici a well-nigh perfect example of self-unification, and Shelley was undoubtedly the only divinity he ever recognised. But Shelley's dying left him with a bitter grudge against the world and drove this positive force of generous manhood into negative courses. This I believe to be a wider reading of Trelawny than the accepted one of taking up his more dubious acts—examining Byron's foot, losing himself in a lawsuit, cutting off one wife's hair and humiliating her successor, and the rest of them,—arbitrary, overbearing, egotistical and repellant as some of them were. There they stand, and if they cannot be whitewashed, they are at least free of any Pecksniffian virus. Trelawny's ill deeds never masqueraded as principle and as committed for the sake of others. He took no advantage of the social mechanism to commit them.

People again are to be judged as much by what they leave undone as by what they do, and a man of Trelawny's stature, of the Giants' race before the Flood, was bound to present a far from blameless record of his deeds. They are less noteworthy than his failure to achieve a fuller measure of significant living. His extraordinarily dynamic nature by no means succeeded in being truly expressive. It frittered itself away; it expended itself on objects and events not worth the output, and it missed that unifying purpose which his essential simplicity as a man demanded. His life, for all his wonderful health, intense and varied experience, noble mien and appearance, prodigal heart and solar personality, is thus more tragical, say, than Katherine Mansfield's with her wasting sickness and her mental pain and her solitude. For she did attain that "real, simple, truthful, full life" that all true men and women dream of, whereas he, for all his Samson strength, but shook the gates of that Kingdom.

Yet, when all is said—and I hope that in this narrative he has said it all for himself better than I could possibly say it for him—he was a mighty man. Nor must our honour be niggardly to one who after all has written two masterpieces. But there was more to him than that, and if often enough he appears to us to lack sensibility of soul, his devotion to Shelley, long as his life and hot as his heart, comes to remind us that he had paid hostages to eternity.

In the final count, the way to see him is as some force of nature passed into a powerful human form and, for all its frailties, an altogether human heart. Of late years we have been directed by enquiry to expel the poison of false theory with which the Victorians inoculated our minds—that nature is a cruel and predatory force only to be policed by civilisation. For when we come to examine the cruelties and savageries in our midst, we find that they are all traceable to civilised institutions themselves. What the Victorians did was to foist the rapacious conditions of their own society upon nature. Nature, therefore, for the first time emerges into our own day without those moral disfigurements with which she had been so arbitrarily clothed. We begin to see her, now that we are losing her, as she really is. Both Shelley and Trelawny bear some resemblance to natural forces, the one spiritualised but "true to the kindred points of heaven and home," the other, often misspent, and yet beautiful in its strength and fire.

To us, living in a period threateningly dominated by the power of the Machine, Trelawny is a hardly credible figure. We seem no longer to breed men like him, men who refuse to fall in with moral or any other form of regimentation and to trade their human birthright for it. In the midst of a culture that began with the Industrial Revolution wherein all our movements have become governed by routine, our lives shaped like matches in a box and our very thoughts standardised, we look back upon him as belonging almost to a different race from ourselves. Certainly we are much freer than were the Victorians with their enslaved women, children and factory-hands; we are less sentimental and so less readily duped by humbug, and we aerate our minds in a less stifling atmosphere. But the Victorians still enslave us, for we have but reacted against them, and have nothing to oppose to their mechanised morality but a sterile, self-conscious intellectualism. We have lost the art of living and the Machine is an impending shadow eating up the sunshine of our individual rights to shape it.

We therefore can look back with wonder at this passionate free instinctive being, and likewise with regret that, throwing off the bonds of external servitude, he could not learn how to govern himself.

# APPENDIX I

## *Shelley's Heart*

In "Shelley's Last Days," printed in the *Fortnightly* of June, 1878 (vol. XXIX) as a review of Trelawny's *Records,* Richard Garnett; in defending Mary Shelley from Trelawny's charges therein, challenges his statement that he offered Shelley's heart, rescued from the flames, to Mary who refused it.

> After the funeral rites of Shelley had been performed [writes Garnett] Trelawny gave the heart, which had remained unconsumed, to Hunt. Mary wrote to Hunt, requesting that it might be sent to her. Hunt refused to part with it, unless Mary would maintain her claim by strong and conclusive arguments. He added that he thought it probable that the relic of his friend would remain in his possession. Mary was in despair. At length the amiable Mrs. Williams undertook to obtain the fulfillment of Mary's wishes. She wrote to Hunt, and represented how grievous and melancholy it was that Shelley's remains should become a source of dissension between his dearest friends. She obtained her purpose. Hunt said that she had brought forward the only argument that could have induced him to yield.

Both Mrs. Marshall and Prof. Dowden repeat Garnett's version of the incident in their own words, and neither of them alludes to Trelawny's reply to it. He did, however, reply in the *Athenæum* of August 3rd in that same year. After the burning, he says:

> I returned to Pisa and at Mary's house showed Vaccà, the Professor of Anatomy at the College, the heart, and bits of the skull, which Vaccà said was very thin. Then I offered the heart to Mrs. Shelley. After a fitful glance at the black and charred piece of flesh, she was too shocked to touch it. Leigh Hunt was standing by her side, and she

said to me, "As you are going to ride to Rome to-morrow, give it to Hunt to take care of"; which was done; and then I narrated to her and to those present an account of the ceremony.

In his last letter to Claire Clairmont, written from Sompting on November 15th, 1875, Trelawny wrote: "I gave Mrs. Shelley the poet's heart; she foolishly gave it to Leigh Hunt—the family now have it."

The truth may never be known, but we can at least weigh the probabilities. If Garnett is right, the episode is psychologically perplexing. Both Hunt and Trelawny must have recognised Mary's priority of claim. Why then did Trelawny, whose zeal on Mary's behalf was at this time boundless and who put his purse at her disposal, offer her the gratuitous offence of delivering the heart to Hunt? Why did Hunt raise such a to-do about giving the heart up to the woman justly entitled to it? Why do Mary's letters at this period overflow with protestations of gratitude to Trelawny, if he had so cruelly wounded her feelings? Lastly, why should Trelawny, in a private letter and three years before Garnett questioned his statement, have put forward a motiveless misrepresentation of the actual facts? Trelawny despised Mary when he found her out, but he certainly did not fabricate untruths about her to gratify a pointless malignity.

If, on the other hand, Trelawny is right, the incidents wear a less artificial air. Hunt was loath to return the heart, for the very good reason that Mary had had her opportunity and lost it. Otherwise, why should he require "strong and conclusive arguments" for something that was self-evident? Trelawny's offer of the heart to Mary was thoroughly consonant with his chivalries to her during the remainder of her days in Italy, as her shrinking from the relic was with her ideas of the niceties. Garnett gives no proofs of his version, which is not so convincing as to afford to stand without them.

# APPENDIX I

Lastly, I have been assured by Mr. T. J. Wise that Trelawny did give the heart to Mary who refused it and gave it to Hunt, who took it to England where he restored it to Mary.

## APPENDIX II

### *The Loss of the "Ariel": Accident or Foul Play?*

Trelawny told Sir Sidney Colvin six months before his death that the "Ariel" had been deliberately run down by an Italian felucca. Shortly after Shelley's drowning, he wrote to Roberts asking him to complete the search for the boat by sending feluccas. Roberts wrote in September to say that the boat had been found, that it had not capsized and that the bowsprit was snapped, the gunwale stove in and the starboard timbers were broken. Trelawny maintained this account all his life. In November of 1875, his daughter Zella wrote to him from Rome:

> My dear Father,
>
> I have just heard something that will interest you. A little while ago there died at Spezia an old sailor who, in his last confessions to the priest (whom he told to make it public), stated that he was one of the crew that ran down the boat containing Shelley and Williams, which was done under the impression that the rich "Milord Byron" was on board with lots of money. They did not intend to sink the boat, but to board her and murder Byron. She sank, he said, as soon as she was struck. This account was sent to my friends, the K. . . . s, by a person they are intimate with, and who lives at Spezia, and, I believe, knows the priest.

A month later a certain V. E.[1] wrote a letter to the *Times,* declaring that this "old fisherman" had died as far back as 1863, and that the priest who confessed him confided his story to an Italian nobleman living in the neighbourhood. Thence, by way of some friends, it reached Zella's ears. Neither the noble nor the priest could, he goes on, have had any motive in concocting such a story forty years after the poet's death. The writer's friend, with whom he was staying at Lerici, told him the story in the following words: "A boatman dying near Sarzana confessed, about twelve years ago, that he was one of five who, seeing the English boat in great danger, ran her down, thinking milord Inglese was on board, and they should find gold." Trelawny reprinted these two letters in the *Records* and followed them up by one of his own also to the *Times,* and reprinted both in the *Records* and Buxton's edition of the *Letters:*

---

[1] Vincent Eyre?

> The Italian fishing feluccas on that part of the coast [the letter runs] are long, low, heavy-decked vessels, carrying from seven to ten men, lateen sails, sharp in the bows, and very fast sailers. Shelley's was an undecked open boat, schooner rigged. She was so light that she had three tons and a half of iron ballast to bring her down to her bearings. At midday on the 8th July, 1822, Shelley came from his banker's at Leghorn, with a canvass bag full of Tuscan crown pieces. Byron, Shelley, Williams, and myself could not be distinguished by the sailors at the harbour, and Byron's and Shelley's boats had their sails loose ready for sea. It was a light land breeze when we weighed our anchors and started at two p.m.

He then describes how the captain of the port prevented him from sailing in the "Bolivar" as his port clearances and bill of health were lacking.

> Two feluccas went out of port at the same time, in the same direction as Shelley's boat. I remained on board. Some hour after the squall came on; the wind and the sea mist veiled everything from sight at any distance, and the first thing we saw was several feluccas returning for refuge into the harbour.

One of these feluccas, according to a Genoese messenger Trelawny sent to enquire on board her, had an oar of the "Ariel's," but the crew denied it. After some days' suspense,

> I rode along the coast line to Via Reggio, and collected evidence that Shelley's boat had been wrecked. . . . After

> a course of dredging she was found in ten fathoms water, about two miles off the coast of Via Reggio. The cause of her loss was then evident. Her starboard quarter was stove in, evidently by a blow from the sharp bows of a felucca; and, as I have said, being undecked and having three tons and a half of iron ballast, she would have sunk in two minutes.

Hunt's comment was: "Among the various conjectures respecting this lamentable event, a suspicion was not wanting that the boat had been run down by a larger one with a view to plunder it. Mr. Shelley was known to have taken money on board." It is very curious what little noise this suspicion made both at the time and in the seventies when Trelawny wrote to the *Times*. John George Cooke wrote to Severn's son on June 29th, 1878, repeating the story of the old fisherman's confession (along with some highly spiced scandal about Trelawny himself) as though it were a mere *friandise* of gossip. The *Athenæum* of May 4th, 1878, in a review of the *Records*, remarked that as Shelley had time to double open and thrust into his pocket the Keats' volume and Williams' shirt was half over his head and one of his boots was missing, it looked as though they had had a little time to prepare making a swim for it. The fisherman's evidence is dismissed as too flimsy.

Garnett in "Shelley's Last Days" (*Fortnightly*, June, 1878) contended that the sailors could not have mistaken Shelley's boat for Byron's large yacht, and, in that case, why should they suppose that Byron was aboard? In a storm, they would have had to look to their own safety. Two English ladies, at the writer's request, dropped in at Lerici to investigate the truth of the *Times* correspondence. They found that the fisherman had made the statement in question, which also appeared in Dr. Lee's work on the health-resorts of the Mediterranean (1872). But it had not been tested nor was it certain whether it concerned Shelley's boat at all. In fact, the only man who seemed to have accepted Trelawny's belief without qualification was that *fidus* but uncritical Achates, Mr. Richard Edgcumbe.

In want of further evidence, the problem must remain a mystery, but one in which the scales remain evenly balanced, not tipped in favour of an accident. The *Athenæum* arguments might well suit Trelawny's case as well as their own, since it does not take two minutes to thrust a book of poems into the pocket or take a shirt half off, or even a boot entirely so. If Shelley again appeared on the quay with a bag of coins, there seems no reason why the sailors should need to confuse him with Byron. The bag might have been fair game whomsoever it belonged to, and a felucca could surely ride out with ease a squall that might have jeopardised so frail a craft as the "Ariel." And the stoving in of the starboard quarter is not evidence to be disregarded. On the other hand, the felucca might have rammed the "Ariel" by accident, and one has to consider the risk to their plunder the felucca's crew took by smashing into the "Ariel." No, the sinking of the "Ariel" is one of those mysteries that will in all probability for ever evade a solution.

# APPENDIX III

## *A Letter of Joseph Severn*

In reference to a projected monument for Shelley's tomb at Rome, the following extraordinary letter from Joseph Severn to his friend Charles Armitage Brown, must be given *in extenso*. It was written in April, 1823, the period when Trelawny was describing to Mary his labours in the Protestant cemetery:

> There is a mad chap come here, whose name is Trelawny. I do not know what to make of him, further than his queer, and I was near saying, shabby behaviour to me. He comes as the friend of Shelley, great, glowing and rich in romance. Of course I showed all my paint-pot politeness to him, to the very brim—assisted him to move the ashes of Shelley to a spot where he himself (when this world has done with his body) will lie. He wished me to think, myself, and consult my friends, about a monument to Shelley. The situation is beautiful, and one and all thought a little basso-relievo would be the best taste. I was telling him the subject I had proposed for Keats, and he was struck with the propriety of it for Shelley, and my friend Mr. Gott (whom I mentioned to you) was to be the doer of it. I made the drawing, which caused me some trouble, yet after expressing the greatest liking for it, the pair of Mustachios has slinked off from it, without giving us the yes or no—without even the why or wherefore. I am sorry at this most on Mr. Gott's account, but I ought to have seen that this Lord Byron's jackal was rather weak in all points that I could judge, though strong enough in stilettos. We have not had any open rupture, nor shall we, for I have no doubt that this "cockney corsair" fancies he has greatly obliged us by all this trouble we have had. But tell me who is this odd fish? They talk of him here as a camelion (*sic*) who went mad on reading Lord Byron's "Corsair."

Perhaps the cause for this outburst was that lack of punctilio in Trelawny which was always getting him into trouble. It is so like Byron's own view of Trelawny, or the view he liked to take, that to call him "Lord Byron's jackal" is hardly to the point.

But Severn's explosion was a mere squib, for in after years they corresponded on terms of great amity.

In Sharp's *Life and Letters of Joseph Severn* this malicious story is given. Trelawny wrote to many of his literary friends for an epitaph and "a friend who was present at the interment," suggested one for himself, "Here lies Ed. Trelawny, for he is still living."

# APPENDIX IV

## *Copies of Shelley's Poems in the Trelawny MSS.*

*Remembrance* (1821).
*To Edward Williams* (1821).
*Third Version of "A Bridal Song"* (1821).
*The Magnetic Lady to her Patient* (1822).
*"When the Lamp is Shattered"* (1822).
*To Jane: The Invitation* (1822).
*With a Guitar, To Jane* (1822).
*To Jane, "The Keen Stars were twinkling"* (1822).

These were given by Trelawny to William Rossetti for his edition of Shelley. He also showed Rossetti a copy of the originally printed but unpublished *Queen Mab*.

Shelley gave Trelawny a copy of his *Oedipus Tyrannus*. Trelawny gave it to his daughter, Letitia, who married Col. Call, and the Colonel sold it to Mr. T. J. Wise. Only five copies of the book are in existence, for the edition was burned by order of the Censor.

# APPENDIX V

## *Swimming Niagara*

The following account of Trelawny's daring the river between the rapids and the falls is dated the 5th of August, 1833, and was addressed to no person nor periodical. He refers to this magnificent and purposeless venture in an unpublished letter to Augusta White: "I was alone with no aid within a mile. I did manage—who knows how—to reach the shore. I was exhausted and I had made up my mind to die. I have not recovered the shock of my upset in the coach." Trelawny then left Niagara for New York, Virginia and South Carolina. I quote his narrative in full because its vivacity translates the surge of the elements into literary terms which are not unworthy of the natural splendour that prompted them. It seems to me that no prose anthology can be complete without including a portion of so life-giving a picture both of himself and his mighty feat.

Today I have been mortified, bitterly. The morning was hot and cloudless, I sauntered along the brink of the Rapids, descended the long tiresome spiral staircase which leads directly to the ferry on the river.

Instead of crossing over in the boat to Canada, I threaded my way along the rugged and rocky shore. I came to a solitary hollow by the river side, about a mile below the Falls. The agitated water mining the banks, had broadened its bed and covered the shelving shore there with massy fragments of dark limestone rocks. The mural cliffs rose on each side two or three hundred feet almost perpendicularly, yet pine trees and cypress and yew managed to scale the steep ascent and to hold their ground, boring into the hard rocks with their harder roots, till, undermined by the continual rising of the water, they had fallen. Even at this distance from the Falls the waters in the midchannel were still boiling and bubbling and covered with foam, raging along and spreading out in all directions. Pieces of timber I threw in spun round in concentric circles. Then turning and twisting against the rocks like crushed serpents, it flowed on to the Rapids and formed dangerous whirlpools two miles lower down. Above the Falls this river is a mile broad, where I was now it was less than half a mile, above and below me not more than a quarter; so that flowing through a deep ravine of rocks it was very deep even to its brink, and in the centre they say above a 100 feet. The sun was now at its zenith, and its rays concentrated into the tunnel made my brains boil, the water was not agitated, was of that tempting emerald green which looks so voluptuously cool like molten jasper flaked with snow.

I never resist the syren pleasure when she is surrounded by her water nymphs in their sea green mantles, and my blood is boiling. I hastily cast aside my clothes, with nerves throbbing and panting breast, and clambering up to a ledge of rock jutting over a clear deep pool, I spring in head foremost. In an instant every nerve was restrung and set to the tune of vigorous boyhood. I spring up and gambol between wind and water.

To excel in swimming long and strong limbs and a pliant body are indispensable, the chest too should be broad, the greatest breadth of most fish is close to the head; the back must be bent inward (incavated), the head reined back like a swan's and the chest thrown forward; thus the body will float without exertion. The legs and arms after striking out should be drawn up and pressed close together, and five seconds between each stroke, as in running distances so in swimming distances, it is indispensable. Your life depends on it, avoid being blown, the strongest swimmer, like the strongest horse, is done when his respiration fails. Utterly regardless of these truths, notwithstanding it is the pure gold of personal experience, in the wanton pride of my strength and knowledge of the art, I gambolled and played all sorts of gymnastics; methought the water, all wild as it was, was too sluggish, so I wheeled into mid-channel and dashing down the stream I was determined to try my strength in those places where the waters are wildest. I floated for some time over the eddying whirls without much difficulty and then struck through them right across the river.

This triumph steeled my confidence of the "ice-brook's temper," after gaining breath regardless that I had changed the field of action in having been borne a long way down the river, consequently that I was rapidly approaching the Rapids, which nor boat nor anything with life can live in.

Well, thinking alone of the grandeur and wildness of the scene, I swam on without difficulty yet I felt the chill that follows over-exertion stealing up my extremities, cramping my toes and fingers with sudden twitches. I was again returned to the centre of the vortical part of the river, I was out of sight of the Falls, the water was becoming rougher and rougher, I was tossed about and drifting fast down. I now remembered the terrible whirlpool below me, I could make no progress, the stream was mastering me. I thought I had no time to lose so I incautiously put forth my strength, springing in the water with energy to cross the arrowy stream transversely, conceiving that when I reached the smoother part, out of the vortex of mid-channel, my work was done. I seemed to be held by the legs and sucked downwards, the scumming surf broke over and blinded me, I began to ship water. In the part of the river I had now drifted to the water was frightfully agitated, it was broken and raging all around me; still my exertions augmented with the opposition, I breathed quicker and with increasing difficulty, I kept my eye steadily on the dark-browed precipice before me, it seemed receding, I thought of returning, but the distance and difficulty was equally balanced; the rotary action of the water under its surface, when I relaxed my exertions, sucked my body, heels foremost, downwards. Whilst breathing hard I swallowed the spray, my strength suddenly declined, I was compelled to keep my mouth open panting and gasping, my lower extremities sank. I looked around to see if there was any timber floating, or any boat or person on the shore. There was nothing and if there had been no one could have seen me enveloped in spray, and the distant voice of the Falls drowned all other sounds: the thought that my time was come at last flashed across my mind, I thought what a fool I was to blindly abuse my own gained knowledge and thus cast myself away; the lessons of experience like the inscriptions on tombs grow faint and illegible if not continually renewed. Why did I attempt to cross a part of the river that none had ever crossed before? There was not even the excitement of a fool on the shore to see or say he had seen me do it. Why had I not spoken to the man at the ferry, he would have followed me in his boat. I remembered too hearing the thing was not practicable; why what a wayward fool am I. These things acted as a spur, these truths crossed my mind rapidly, and I thought of all the scenes of drowning I had seen; of my own repeated perils that way. I heard the voices of the dead calling to me, I actually thought, as my mind grew darker, that they were tugging at my feet. Aston's (see the *Younger Son*) horrid death by drowning nearly paralysed me. I endeavoured in vain to shake off these thick-coming fancies, they glowed before me. Thus I lay suspended between life and death. I was borne fearfully and rapidly along. I had lost all power, I could barely keep my head above the surface, I waxed fainter and fainter, there was no possibility of help. I occasionally turned on my back to rest and endeavour to recover my breath, but the agitation of the water and surf got into my mouth and nostrils, the water stuck in my throat, which was instantly followed by the agonizing sensation of strangulation. This I well knew was an unerring first symptom of a suffocating death. Instead of air I sucked in the flying spray it's impossible either to swallow or cast out again, and whilst struggling to do either I only drew in more. The torture of choking was terrible, my limbs were cold and almost lifeless, my stomach too was cramped. I saw the waters of the Rapids below me raging and all about hissing. I thought now how much I would have given for a spiked nail so fixed that I could have rested the ball of my toe on it for one instant and have drawn one gulp of air unimpeded, to have swallowed the water that was sticking into the midchannel of my windpipe; nay I would have been glad at any risk to have rested on the point of a lancet. I had settled down till I was suspended in the water, the throbbing and heaving of my breast and heart and increased swelling in my throat had now so completely paralysed my limbs that (I thought?) of giving up a struggle which seemed hopeless. My uppermost thought was mortification at this infallible proof of my declining strength, well I knew there was a time in which I could have forced my way through ten times these impediments; the only palliation I could think of was the depth and icy chilliness of the water which came straight from the regions of the frigid zone. This contracted all my muscles and sinews, my head grew dizzy from bending the spine backwards, the blow I had received from the upset I had not recovered; the ball, too, immediately over my jugular vein retards the circulation; my right arm has never recovered its strength and it was now benumbed. All this and much more I thought of, my body, said I, is "like a leaky skiff" no longer sea-worthy, and "my soul shall swim out of it" and free myself. I thought the links that held me to life were so worn that the shock which broke them would be slight. It had always been my prayer to die in the pride of my strength,—however it approached, with wealth and power, or on crutches and in rags, was to me equally loathsome,—better to perish before he had touched (me) with his withering finger, in this wild place, on a foreign shore. Niagara "chanting a thunder psalm"[1] as a requiem was a fitting end to my wild meteor-like life. Thoughts like these absorbed me. I no longer in the bitterness of my heart struggled against the waters which whirled me along, and certainly this despair as if in mockery preserved me. For looking again towards the shore I saw that I had been carried nearer to it, and without any exertion on my part I floated lighter, the under-tow no longer drew me down, and presently the water became smooth, I had been cast out of the vortex and was drifting towards the rocks. I heard the boiling commotion of the tremendous Rapids and saw the spume flying in the air a little below me, and then I lay stranded, sick and dizzy, everything still seemed whirling round and round and the waters singing in my ears. The sun had descended behind the cliffs, and my limbs shook so violently that I could not stand; I lay there for some time, and then, as the rocks were too rugged to admit of walking, I swam slowly up along the shore. I was deeply mortified, the maxim which had so long borne me towards my desires triumphantly—go on till you are stopped—fails me here. I have been stopped, there is no denying it, death would have pained me less than this conviction. I must change my vaunting crest.

My shadow trembling on the black rock as reflected by the last rays of the setting sun, shows me as in a glass, that my youth and strength have fled. When I had recovered my breath I dressed myself and walked sullenly to the ferry boat. I took the two heavy oars and exerting my utmost strength bent them like rattans as I forced the clumsy boat against the stream. The ferry man where I landed seemed surprised at my impetuosity, he said the sun's been so hot today that he was dead beat. I said, "Why how old are you?" "Oh," he said, "that's nothing"—he was thirty-eight. "Thirty-eight," I echoed, "then you are not worth a damn, you had better look out for the alms-house." I started off running up the steep acclivity and heard him muttering, "Why, you aren't so very young yourself; what the devil does he mean?" When I got to the summit I threw myself down on the ledge of rock, instead of over as I should have done, and fell asleep, and thus ended the day; I shall not however forget it.

---

[1] *Epipsychidion.*

It was characteristic of the doughty Cornish Pagan that his emotion should have been rather mortification at his failure than relief at his escape. He wrote a similar though shorter (and almost as spirited) account of his attempt, probably taken from the one here given, to Claire from South Carolina in the December of that same year.

# APPENDIX VI

## *Portraits*

The most familiar of the Trelawny portraits, of course, is that in which he appears as the old mariner, "dreaming among his charts like Tennyson's Ulysses," as Mr. Brailsford remarks, in Sir John Millais's picture hung in the Tate Gallery. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1874. The Victorian nymph holding the mariner's hand and reading from a book has been wrongly called both Trelawny's daughter, Letitia, and Miss Taylor of Sompting who looked after him in his extreme old age. She was, however, just an artist's model. Trelawny told Rossetti in 1873 that he had sat for Millais, and Mr. Trelawny Irving has told me how the sittings came about. When Trelawny was dining with Millais, he told Lady, then Mrs. Millais, that she ought to take Turkish Baths to prevent herself getting stout. She was sceptical of the remedy, and when Millais asked Trelawny to sit for him, he refused to do so unless Lady Millais would undertake to indulge in a Turkish Bath per sitting for her husband. On these terms, the bargain was struck. Trelawny never liked the result, justly, I think. The likeness itself is good enough but the huddled and battered air of the old mariner was not at all to his taste. As a matter of fact, the portrait is not nearly so good as the photograph of Trelawny in his old age which is reproduced in this volume. In spite of the awful bureau on which his arm is leaning, this photograph does catch something of the man's volcanic force. The Millais portrait is too sentimentalised for that.

Both D'Orsay's and Joseph Severn's portraits are indifferent. The former, painted in 1836, makes him look rather like a successful grocer in Parliament. Oddly enough, Trelawny thought it made him appear Frenchified. An unpublished letter to Augusta White refers to the "profile likeness sketched and lithographed by D'Orsay. It is a frenchified version of your old friend—better than nothing.",

Severn's portrait was published—very appropriately—in Mrs. Marshall's *Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley: Her Life and Letters*. The flashing eyes, the flowing raven locks, the enigmatic air, haughty mien and defiant bearing are just Mary Shelley's fond image of the "giovane stravagante." It is certainly more Oriental than English, even the foreign Mediterranean English stock of Cornwall, and is a school-girl's Othello. His close friend, Kirkup, painted a somewhat similar portrait of him, which first appeared in the *Field* in 1881. Here he appears in Greek or rather Albanian dress, with a couple of ornamental knives in his belt and in a turban with a long train. His outstretched hand grasps a staff like the Giant's on Wilmington Hill in Sussex. He stands erect and moustachio'd in the entrance to a Byronic cavern with the staff sticking up into a tumultuous sky. He looks like a cross between a Malay raja and a Greek corsair. Kirkup also did a lithograph of Trelawny and Severn a pen drawing (1838). Both are in the National Portrait Gallery.

Lastly, a mezzotint by David Lucas was published in Prothero's edition of Byron's *Works*. Trelawny was without question an extraordinarily fine figure of a man—his personal appearance is described in the text—but perhaps for that very reason, coupled with his weakness for theatricalising himself, none of his portraits are particularly good.

## APPENDIX VII

### *A List of Books*

The books mentioned in the following list are those of which I have made particular use. Those marked with an asterisk (*) have been of the most service.

**Life and Letters of Anne Isabella, Lady Noel Byron.* By Ethel Colburn Mayne. (1929.)

**Life of Byron.* By Ethel Colburn Mayne. Second edition. (1928.)

**Byron: The Last Journey.* By Harold Nicolson. (1924.)

**The Pilgrim of Eternity.* By John Drinkwater. (1925.)

*The Works of Lord Byron: Letters and Journals.* Edited by Rowland E. Prothero. Vol. vi. New Edition. (1901.)

**Byron.* By André Maurois. Two vols. (Paris, 1930.)

**Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries.* By Leigh Hunt. Two vols. New edition. (1828.)

*Conversations of Lord Byron noted during a Residence with his Lordship at Pisa in the Years* 1821 *and* 1822. By Thomas Medwin. New edition. (1824.)

*The Life of Lord Byron.* By the Hon. Roden Noel. (1890.)

*Byron in England: His Fame and After-Fame.* By Samuel C. Chew. (1924.)

*Byron: The Last Phase.* By Richard Edgcumbe. (1909.)

*Lord Byron in His Letters.* Edited by H. V. Collins. (1927.)

**The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* By Edward Dowden. Two vols. (1886.)

**The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* Collected and edited by Roger Ingpen. Two vols. (1909.)

*Ariel.* By André Maurois. (1923.)

*Shelley.* English Men of Letters Series. By John Addington Symonds. (1914.)

**Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley: Her Life and Letters.* By Mrs. Julian Marshall. Two vols. (1889.)

**The Adventures of a Younger Son.* Edited by Edward Garnett. (1890.)

**The Adventures of a Younger Son.* Edited by H. N. Brailsford. Bohn's Libraries. (1914.)

**The Letters of Edward John Trelawny.* Edited by H. Buxton Forman, C.B. (1910.)

*The Life and Letters of Joseph Severn.* By William Sharp. (1892.)

*The Literary Life and Correspondence of the Countess of Blessington.* Edited by R. R. Madden. (1855.)

*Memoirs of the Affairs of Greece.* By Julius Millingen. (1831.)

*Greece in* 1923 *and* 1924. By the Hon. Colonel Leicester Stanhope. (1824.)

*The Correspondence of Leigh Hunt.* Edited by J. Thornton Hunt. Two vols. (1862.)

**The Proving of Psyche.* By Hugh I'Anson Fausset. (1929.)

*The Dictionary of National Biography.*

It seems to me needless to enumerate in precise bibliographical detail the scattered Trelawniana published in various numbers of the *Athenæum, Temple Bar, The London Literary Gazette, The Whitehall Review, Scribner's Magazine, The Monthly Magazine, The Westminster Review, The Pall Mall Gazette, Blackwood's Magazine, The Fortnightly Review,* and other periodicals of the last and present centuries.

In the same way, I have omitted from this list such books as Fanny Kemble's *Records of a Girlhood* and *Last Records,* Lady Blessington's *Idler in Italy* and other volumes whose references to Trelawny are scanty or which bear only indirectly upon my narrative.

## PRINCIPAL EDITIONS OF TRELAWNY'S WORKS

*The Adventures of a Younger Son.* Three vols. (1831.)

—— New edition. Bentley's Standard Novels. No. 48. (1835.)

—— New edition. The Parlour Library. (1848.)

—— New edition. With an Introduction by Ed. Garnett. Illustrated. The Adventure Series. (1890.)

—— New edition. With an Introduction by H. N. Brailsford. Two vols. Bohn's Popular Library. (1914.)

—— New edition. With an Introduction by Ethel Colburn Mayne. World's Classics. (1925.)

# APPENDIX VII

## FOREIGN EDITIONS

*Un Cadet de Famille.* Traduit par Victor Perceval. Publié par Alexandre Dumas. 3 sér. Paris. (1860.)
*Abentheuer in Ostindien.* Aus dem Englischen von C. Richard. Aachen und Leipzig. (1832.)
*The Adventures of a Younger Son.* (A pirated edition.) Two vols. New York. (1834.)
—— With an Introduction by E. Collins. King's Treasures of Literature. London and Toronto. (1925.)
*Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron.* (1858.)
—— Boston. (1858.)
*Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author.* A new edition, amplified. Two vols. (1878.)
—— A new edition with two portraits. (1887.)
—— A new edition. New Universal Library. (N.D.)
—— A new edition. Edited by Edward Dowden. (1906.)
*The Letters of Edward John Trelawny.* Edited with a brief Introduction and Notes by C. Buxton Forman, C.B. (1910).

Mr. T. J. Wise has privately printed a few copies of four letters from Trelawny discussing Shelley, Byron and others; and of three letters on Shelley, Harriet and Mary Shelley. I have omitted fuller bibliographical details here, as all these letters are included in Buxton Forman's edition.

# APPENDIX VIII

## *A Calendar of Trelawny's Life*

1792. Birth.

1801–3. School.

1805. Joined the Navy in the "Superb." Voyage to Cadiz. Transferred to the "Colossus."

1806. Deserted the Navy at Bombay, after leaving Dr. Burney's Academy at Greenwich in a King's ship.

1806–12? Privateering in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Marriage to Zela. Off Batavia in 1811. Death of Zela.

1813 or 1814. Marriage to Julia Addison on return to England.

1814–20. Travelling? In Switzerland by 1820.

1820. Geneva. Meeting with Edward Williams and Thomas Medwin.

1821. Father's death. Return to England. Out to Pisa to meet the Shelleys.

1822. Association with Shelley and Byron at Pisa, Lerici and Genoa. Cremation of Shelley. Mediterranean tour.

1823. At Shelley's grave in Rome. On board the "Hercules" with Byron for Greece. Parting with Byron at Cephalonia. At Tripolitza, Athens, and campaigning with Odysseus in the mountains.

1824. At Missolonghi after Byron's death. Marriage with Tersitza Kamenou. In the Cave of Odysseus on Mount Parnassus.

1825. Besieged on Mount Parnassus. Escape with a severe wound from attempted assassination. Removed to the Ionian Isles.

1825–7. At Zante. Divorced by Tersitza. Lawsuit. Convalescence.

1828. In England. Family visits in Cornwall.
1829–30. From Paris to Florence. Writing of *The Adventures of a Younger Son.* Friendship with Landor and Armitage Brown. Joined by his little daughter, Zella.
1830. MSS. of *The Adventures of a Younger Son* sent to Mary Shelley.
1831. Publication of *The Adventures of a Younger Son.* Offer of marriage to Mary Shelley.
1832. In England again with Zella.
1833–5. In north and south United States of America. Voyages up the Ohio and Mississippi. Swimming Niagara. Plantation life in South Carolina.
1835–7. In England once more. With Zella in Cornwall. London society.
1837. End of friendship with Mary Shelley.
1837–9. Cornwall and Putney. Retirement from London society.
1839–47. Marriage with Lady Goring. Life at Putney. Departure for Usk in Monmouthshire.
1847–58. Farming, horticulture and building at Usk.
1858. Separation from his wife. Publication of *The Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron.* Departure from Usk.
1858–69. Putney? Visits to Baden. First talks with William Rossetti. Friendship with Swinburne.
1869–81. Living at Sompting near Worthing. First talks with Richard Edgcumbe (1875).
1878. Reissue with additions of the *Recollections* under the title of *Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author.*
1881. Death. Cremation and burial in Rome beside Shelley.

# INDEX

Addison, Julia, 3, 249, 264
*Adventures of a Younger Son,* 1-39, 105, 106, 169, 183, 203, 208, 213, 232, 242, 244, 264, 266, 319-20, 329
Albaro. *See* Genoa.
Allegra, 74, 75, 136-7, 138, 144, 323
Argos, 256, 264
"Ariel," the, 55, 138, 144, 150, 154-7, 168, 170, 172-81, 191, 319, 331, Appendix II, 342-5
Arnold, Matthew, 122, 126, 136, 140
Athens, 257, 258, 262, 263, 272, 273, 275

Bibliography, Appendix VII, 357-359
Blake, William, 51, 162, 225, 232, 320, 321
Blaquière, 97, 261
Blessington, Lady, 63, 75, 86, 89, 92, 98, 300, 301
Blind, Mathilde, 128, 174, 314, 323, 325, 328, 332
Blunden, Edmund, 14, 76
Boccella, Jane, 247, 292
"Bolivar," the, 65, 151, 154, 168, 171, 183
Borrow, George, 15-7
Bowring, John, 102
Brailsford, H. N., 12, 18-20, 243
Brown, Charles Armitage, 6, 7, 9, 203, 288, 319
Browne, Hamilton, 92, 95, 257
Brummell, Beau, 60
Bruno, Dr., 92, 100, 103
Byrde, Mrs. M. B., 298, 303, 306, 307, 310, 313
Byron, Lady, 68, 69, 70, 71, 73
Byron, Lord, and Augusta Leigh, 67, 68, 323
- and his environment, 47, 59-60, 68, 74, 83, 113, 323, 334
- and Shelley, 41-2, 52, 53, 55, 56, 57, 73-5, 87-8, 106, 113, 119, 126, 136, 137, 139, 158, 199, 200, 324
- and the burning of Shelley's body, 172, 175, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 192-3
- fatness of, 66
- first meeting with Trelawny, 40-3
- in Greece, 44, 67, 84, 104, 112-3, 200, 258-9, 286, 325
- influence on *Adventures of a Younger Son,* 4, 5, 6
- irresolution of, 61, 62, 63, 88, 89, 95, 106, 112, 126, 199, 223, 256
- lameness of, 41, 44, 64, 87, 107-10, 111, 325, 336
- marriage of, 60, 67, 68, 73, 265
- redemption of, 61, 67, 83, 84-90, 93, 97, 98, 100, 101, 102, 103, 113, 260, 263, 286, 325
- the realist, 43, 59, 61, 62, 64, 65, 84, 89
- Trelawny's view of, 44-6, 48-9, 51-2, 53, 54, 55, 57-8, 61-2, 66, 67-8, 82-3, 84, 85, 90, 91, 107-13, 153, 155, 255, 256, 286, 322-6
- view of Trelawny, 7, 14, 15, 21, 22-35, 45-7, 48-51, 65, 90, 91, 104, 112, 260, 263, 273
- war on himself, 45, 47, 48, 49, 52, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 82, 83, 84, 87, 89, 102, 127, 139, 158, 231, 237-8

Call, Letitia, 246, 288, 296, 306
Cefn Ila. *See* Usk.
Cephalonia, 50, 94, 95, 99, 267, 271, 272, 275, 280, 284
Clairmont, Claire, 75, 84, 136-8, 191, 194, 198, 210
Clairmont Claire and Trelawny, 9, 10, 50, 59, 71, 119, 121, 183, 206, 208, 210, 211, 214, 233, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 241, 245, 247, 249, 250, 251, 252, 255, 264, 265, 269, 283, 290, 292, 298, 304, 306, 314, 317, 323, 326, 327, 333
Clairmont, Paola, 233
Cobbe, Frances Power, 107
Colocotronis, 257
Colvin, Sir Sidney, 122, 289, 309, 318
Committee, Greek, 86, 102, 271
Cooke, John George, 267-8, 296, 317
Cowper, William, 234, 250
Curlew, 182-3
Curran, Amelia, 282

Darwin, Charles, 320
Dawkins, Mr., 174
Dowden, Professor, 2, 121, 171, 220, 222
Drinkwater, John, 46, 54, 66, 68, 87, 96

Edgcumbe, Richard, 10, 57, 71, 107, 108, 120, 128, 200, 217, 314, 317, 324, 326, 331

Falconer, Judge, 309
Fausset, Hugh, 163-7, 247, 330
Fenton, 276, 277, 279, 281, 287, 319
Finch, Robert, 269
Finlay, George, 107, 275
Fletcher, 92, 107, 108, 260, 324
Florence, 78, 105, 203, 210, 214, 244, 250, 255, 272, 288-90, 293
Forman, Buxton, 170, 171, 174, 183, 196, 212, 219, 222, 225, 233, 235, 240, 253, 264, 282
Fountain, Paul, 246, 247
Freeborn, Mr., 184
Friswell, J. Hain, 314

Gamba, Count, 62, 92, 94, 97, 99, 260
Garnett, Edward, 2, 7, 213, 216, 243
Garnett, Richard, 68, 107, 123, 125, 126, 144, 218-20, 331
Geneva, 88, 115, 116
Genoa, 46, 63, 75, 78, 138, 172, 184, 193, 194, 200, 255, 260
Giants, the, 315, 336
Gisborne, John, 151
Gisborne, Maria, 149, 156, 192, 194, 221, 226
Godwin, William, 215, 326
Goethe, 53, 93
Gordon's *History of the Greek Revolution,* 280, 287
Goring, Lady Vane, 232, 237, 249, 294, 296, 302, 307-11
Graham, Cunninghame, 205
Graham, W., 50, 137
Greece, War of Independence, 86, 89, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 104, 105, 169, 202, 255, 256, 257-60, 275, 277-9, 285-8
Gribble, Francis, 138, 227
Guiccioli, Teresa, 74, 80, 87, 195

Hamilton, Commodore, Rowan, 281, 283, 286
"Hercules," brig, 90-4
Hobhouse, John Cam, 72, 86, 91, 283
Hogg, Thomas Jefferson, 74, 114, 119, 121, 132, 221, 223, 253, 306, 326
Hudson, W. H., 120, 246, 247, 308
Hunt, John, 78, 233, 284

# INDEX

Hunt, Leigh, 56, 72, 233, 234, 257, 262, 273, 284
  and Byron, 75-83, 84, 86, 111, 113, 200, 324
  and Shelley, 75, 78, 81, 135, 138-40, 141, 143, 151, 168, 169, 170, 171, 175, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 185, 192, 193, 221-2, 253, 326
Hunt, Marianne, 76, 80, 139, 281

Ingpen, Roger, 114
Irving, C. M. Trelawny, 266, 269, 274, 292, 293, 294, 295
Irving, Washington, 227
Ithaca, 94

Keats, John, 6, 56, 102, 139, 173, 180, 199, 203, 234, 267, 288, 320, 333
Kemble, Fanny, 297
Kennedy, Dr., 50
Kirkup, Seymour, 9, 244, 269, 293, 329
Klephtes, 283, 287

Landor, Walter Savage, 6, 9, 203, 267, 289, 300, 301, 307
Lawsuit, Trelawny's, 202, 285
Leghorn, 76, 92, 93, 138, 151, 155, 168, 170, 172, 173, 175, 176, 180, 184, 192, 194, 223, 255, 293
Leigh, Augusta, 3, 67, 68, 69, 72, 73
Leigh, Georgiana, 3
Leigh, Medora, 3, 68
Lerici, 127, 128, 137, 143, 146, 148, 151, 154, 162, 172, 190, 192, 194, 232, 253, 261, 332, 336
*Liberal*, 77, 78, 139
Luis, the steward, 11, 32-3

Magni Casa, 136, 137, 144, 147, 148, 159, 172, 184, 246, 305
Mansfield, Katherine, 166-7, 336
Marshall, Mrs. Julian, 197, 209, 212, 220, 226
Maurois, André, 48, 96, 150
Mavrocordato, Prince, 97, 99, 112, 260, 261, 262, 276, 277, 287
Mayne, Ethel Colburn, 3, 44, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 78, 79, 80, 96, 135, 137
Medwin, Thomas, 50, 98, 114, 123, 141, 142, 159, 182, 253, 255, 326
Meredith, George, 165, 300
Metaxata, 94, 96, 97, 98, 271
Millais, Sir John, 386, 317, 319
Millingen, Dr. Julius, 7, 100, 103, 270-5, 278, 291
Missolonghi, 44, 95, 98, 99, 100, 102, 112, 258, 261, 263, 264, 271, 275, 277, 284
Molesworth, Sir William, 219
Moore, Thomas, 40, 55, 77, 93, 182, 201, 238
Moxon, Edward, 209, 233
Murry, Middleton, 124

Napier, Colonel C. J., 94, 261, 275, 286
Navarino, 104, 285
Nicol, Professor, 101
Nicolson, Harold, 42, 49, 50, 87, 96, 98, 100, 102, 107, 217, 267, 268, 270, 271, 278, 285, 289
Norton, Mrs. Caroline, 211, 300, 301
Nott, Dr., 215, 220-2

Odysseus, 5, 95, 101, 105, 106, 112, 169, 201, 254, 257, 258, 262-4, 267, 268, 272, 273, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 281, 283, 287, 289, 325, 330
Odysseus, Cave of, 240, 264, 275-83
D'Orsay, Count, 300

Palazzo Lanfranchi, 40, 56, 58, 76, 95, 139
Palma, Count, 95
Parry, 100
Pasha, Ibrahim, 271, 284
Pasha, Omer, 278
Payne, John Howard, 227
Payne, Tom, 243
Peacock, J. L., 114, 253, 326
Pisa, 15, 42, 46, 50, 54, 58, 59, 63, 76, 78, 116, 123, 125, 127, 128, 135, 136, 139, 140, 150, 152, 154, 162, 170, 178, 180, 181, 190, 191, 192, 194, 215, 225, 232, 248, 253, 321, 336
Primitive, the, 164, 165, 166, 167, 312-3, 337
Prothero, Rowland E., 97, 107
Puritanism, 166, 312-3

*Queen Mab*, 3, 115, 125, 187, 190, 208, 219, 243, 253

Ravenna, 40, 102
*Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron*, 3, 10, 20, 40, 44, 45, 46, 49, 52, 54, 57-60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 66, 75, 109, 119, 127, 140, 141, 170, 185, 190, 212, 224, 232, 265, 287, 289, 302, 303, 306, 331, 332, 333
*Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author*, 57-9, 77, 109, 128, 141, 142, 144, 147, 158, 159, 170, 196, 215, 217, 253, 275, 325, 327, 331
Roberts, Captain Daniel, 65, 116, 142, 154, 156, 158, 184, 192, 233, 255, 280, 303, 316, 332
Romantic Idea, 125, 163-7, 312
Rossetti, William, 10, 12, 34, 104, 125, 142, 159, 182, 183, 185, 217, 253, 299, 307, 314, 317, 320, 321, 324, 326, 331, 333
Ruskin, John, 250
Ruyter, de, 4, 5, 11, 12, 13, 24, 25, 29, 37, 38, 105, 254, 265

Salona, 101, 104, 258, 260, 278, 283
Saunders, Bailey, 281
Scott, Captain, 92
Senouf. *See* de Ruyter.
Severn, Joseph, 6, 199, 233, 267, 268, 290, 296, 333, Appendix III, 246-7
Shelley, Harriet, 74, 132, 133, 326
Shelley, Mary, and Shelley, 15, 119, 120, 121, 125, 136, 137, 139, 144, 147, 148, 149, 150, 152, 154, 156, 158-9, 170, 190, 192, 203-7, 215-6, 217, 219-20, 222, 223-5, 227, 253, 274, 289, 306
  attitude to Trelawny, 7-8, 106, 151, 187, 189, 192, 193-5, 196, 197-8, 200, 201, 207-8, 209, 211, 243, 261, 270, 273, 290, 308-9
  friendship with Trelawny, 186-215, 216-7, 237-8, 240, 246, 276, 292, 293
  letters from Trelawny to, 6, 7, 10, 11, 44, 111, 112, 185, 197, 198, 201, 202, 207, 208, 210, 233, 242, 243, 249, 261, 263, 270, 283, 285, 290, 291, 300
  the real Mary, 186, 189, 190, 193-4, 195-6, 203-7, 209, 211, 215-6, 221, 225-30, 237, 326, 327-8, 329, 335
Shelley, Percy Bysshe, and Byron. *See* Byron.
  and Greece, 262
  and Mary Shelley. *See* Mary Shelley.
  and Trelawny, 54, 58-9, 116-7
  apparitions of, 143-5, 146-7
  attitude to death, 99, 143-6, 146-7, 151
  copies of poems in Trelawny MSS, Appendix IV, 348

Shelley, Percy Bysshe (*continued*)
  elementalism of, 123-4, 125, 131, 147, 148, 153, 158, 160, 162, 168, 315, 337
  influence on *Adventures of a Younger Son*, 4, 5, 6
  integration of spirit, 122, 123, 124, 125, 127, 132, 133, 134, 139, 142, 145-6, 157, 162, 163, 168, 251-2, 323, 330, 335
  persecution and neglect of, 117, 139-43, 221, 222
  personal appearance of, 116-7, 127
  religion of, 125-6, 134, 161, 168, 221, 222
  resoluteness of, 127-30
  scholarship of, 117, 131-2, 157, 161
  the heart of, Appendix I, 339-41
  the "ineffectual angel," 118, 119, 122-3, 125-6, 135, 136, 161, 162, 163, 191
  the practical man, 135-9
  view of Trelawny, 150-4, 224
Shelley, Sir Percy, 120, 306
Shelley, Sir Timothy, 206
Shenley, Captain, 175, 177, 178, 179, 180
Smith, Sidney, 141
Smollett, Tobias, 7, 17, 31
Sompting, 314, 318, 321, 322, 328-30, 333
Spezia, Bay of, 75, 138, 144, 148, 168, 172, 173, 176, 183, 192, 329
Stanhope, Colonel Leicester, 99, 100, 101, 104, 110, 111, 233, 258, 260, 286
Suliotes, 99, 100
Swinburne, Algernon Charles, 243, 253, 321, 324
Symonds, John Addington, 133-4, 146, 148

Taylor, Miss, 318, 333
Tennyson, Alfred Lord, 226, 321
Tersitza Kamenou, 35, 36, 37, 105, 236, 249, 255, 264-70, 283, 289, 295-6, 308
Thompson, Francis, 126
Tilden, H. J., 8
Tita, 92
Tomlinson, H. M., 88, 89
Tre Palazzi, 54, 118, 120, 154, 221
Trelawny, Charles Brereton, 2, 26-7
Trelawny, Edgar, 296
Trelawny, Edward John, and Byron. *See* Byron.
  and Byron's marriage, 67-73
  and Mary Shelley. *See* Mary Shelley.
  and Odysseus. *See* Odysseus.
  and Shelley. *See* Shelley.
  and Shelley's grave, 84, 120, 184-5, 193, 198, 237, 253, 306, 321, 333, 334
  and Shelley the man, 15, 24, 38-9, 116-7, 120, 157, 180-1, 252-3, 333
  and the burning of Shelley's body, 106, 169-84, 192-3, 319, 332, 333
  calendar of life, Appendix VIII, 360-1
  disillusion and futility, 248-52, 255, 259-260, 263, 285, 286, 297-9, 304, 327, 335, 336
  exhibitionism, 20-2, 23, 25, 29, 45-6, 48, 50, 51, 53, 105, 106, 153, 162-3, 188, 189, 201, 202, 231, 240-1, 261, 272, 285, 322
  friendships of, 114-85, 186-215, 237-9
  in America, 210, 244-6, 249, 292, 295, 297-8, 329, Appendix V, 349-54
  in Cornwall, 202, 233, 288, 294, 301
  in Greece, 94-5, 104-113, 201-2, 252, 254-88
  in the Navy, 3, 12, 13, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31
  lawsuit of. *See* Lawsuit.

Trelawny, E. J. (*continued*)
  love of Shelley, 114, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 153, 181, 183-4, 186, 200, 203, 231, 236-7, 252-4, 287, 289, 291, 304-5, 309, 314, 321, 337
  loves of, 235-7, 248, 249, 270-5, 298, 310, 311-2
  meeting with Shelley, 116-7
  offer of marriage to Mary Shelley, 212-5
  old age of, 59, 218, 308-9, 314-34
  personal appearance of, 33-4, 187, 189, 273, 297
  physical powers, 64-5, 66, 280-3, 305, 308, 310, 314-7, 330, 336
  portraits of, 317, 319; Appendix VI, 355-6
  the elemental, 51, 108-9, 153, 162, 189, 197-8, 234-5, 247, 286, 215, 316, 335, 336, 337, 338
  the rebel, 5, 28, 47-8, 122, 234, 241-7, 255-6, 265, 286, 299, 300, 301, 305, 309, 314, 315, 319, 320, 322, 327-8, 334, 335
  the swimmer, 64-5; Appendix V, 349-54
  the summing-up of, 334-8
  truthfulness of, 11, 14, 15, 19-24, 109-10, 111, 161, 281, 325
  view of Mary Shelley, 190, 195, 197-8, 204, 205, 207, 210-11, 212-3, 214, 215, 217-8, 335
  young days, 1-39, 60, 334-5
Trelawny, Frank, 297
Trelawny, General Henry, 2
Trelawny, Maria Julia, 296
Trelawny, Mrs., 2, 288, 293
Treloen, John of, 2
Trevanion family, 3
Trewithen, 2, 288
Tripolitza, 254, 256

Usk, 185, 301, 303, 304, 306-11, 314, 321, 323, 329, 331

Vaccà, Dr., 139
Van Scolpvelt, 13, 31-2
Viareggio, 169, 170, 173, 174, 175, 176, 179, 184, 250
Victorian Period, 17, 117, 118, 120, 165, 240, 242, 307, 309, 311, 321, 329, 337, 338
Villiers, Mrs., 72
Vivian, Charles, 154, 172, 174
Viviani, Emilia, 206, 218

Whitcombe, W. J., 246, 276, 279-80, 281
White, Augusta, 233, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 248, 294, 296, 303
White, Gilbert, 261
Whitman, Walt, 320
Williams, Edward Shilliker, 76, 79, 115, 128, 137, 138, 140, 142, 144, 147, 148, 150, 152, 154, 156, 168, 169, 170, 171, 174, 175, 176, 177, 181, 190, 191, 255, 326
Williams, Jane, 79, 95, 116-7, 144-5, 147, 148, 149, 150, 153, 154, 170, 190, 191, 194, 199, 200, 201, 206, 218, 235, 254, 309, 327
Wise, T. J., 59
Witt, de. *See* de Ruyter.
Wordsworth, William, 142, 275

Zante, 202, 214, 261, 268, 270, 283, 284, 285
"Zebra," the, 281, 283, 284
Zela, 5, 13, 29, 35-8, 105, 237, 249
Zella, 105, 210, 265, 268, 274, 290, 292-6, 308

## HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

Byron

*By André Maurois*

A brilliant, modern biography. "Beautifully constructed, composed, and *done.*"—*Arnold Bennett. Illustrated.*

La Fayette

*By Brand Whitlock*

"We have rarely found a biography so entrancing as to narrative, reliable in scholarship and generous in inspiration."—*New York Herald-Tribune. Two volumes, illustrated.*

The Letters of Disraeli to Lady Chesterfield and Lady Bradford

*Edited by The Marquis of Zetland*

"Fragrance of lavender and old roses."—*Walter Yust.* "Illuminating commentary on eight momentous years."—*New York Sun. Two volumes, illustrated.*

Disraeli

*By André Maurois*

"Makes English politics as fascinating as 'Alice in Wonderland.' As creative as a fine novel."—*Hugh Walpole. Illustrated.*

Charlotte Corday: And Certain Men of the Revolutionary Torment

*By Marie Cher*

"An authentic, moving version of the Reign of Terror. One of the season's most important offerings."—*New York Telegram. Illustrated.*

The Life of Alcibiades

*By E. F. Benson*

"One of the most readable biographies of the year. A rare combination of literary charm and historical insight."—*Boston Transcript.*

D. APPLETON and COMPANY
*Publishers* *New York*

2989